

AN INTRODUCTION
TO
MODERN DOGRI LITERATURE

BY
NILAMBER DEV SHARMA

शारदा पुस्तकालय
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With Best Compliments,

Ran Lalchand
23-X-77

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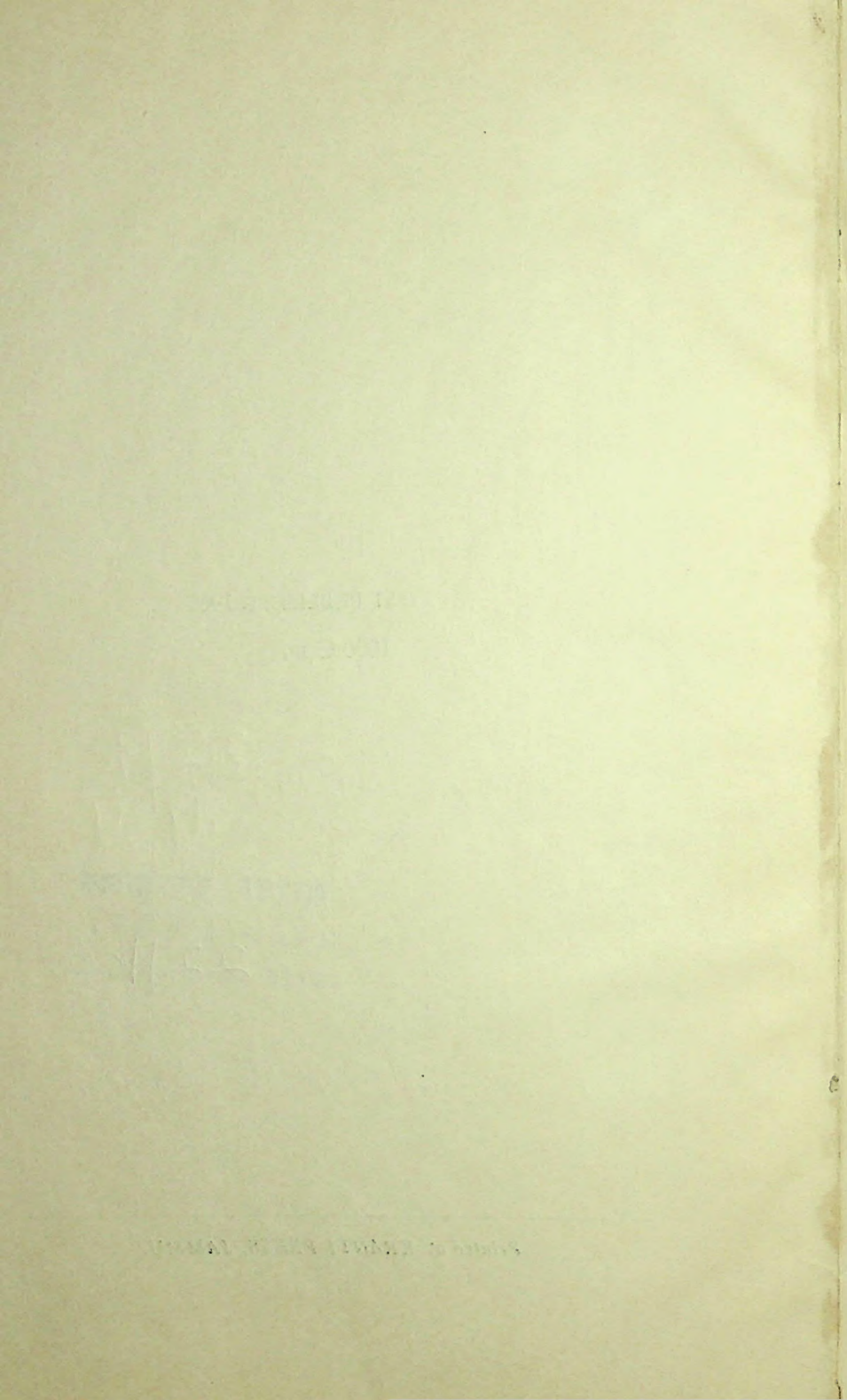
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FOREWORD

These two volumes 'An Introduction to Dogri Literature and Pahari Art,' brought out under the auspices of the Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture, and Languages, are perhaps the first connected and systematic account of important facets of Dogra culture, including Dogri literature, folk music, Pahari art and architecture. Unity in diversity has always been a marked feature in the history of our nation, and the rich diversity of the Indian cultural heritage serves to emphasize the essential and over-riding unity of India. It is only within the framework of this larger national unity that regional cultures can flourish and find full opportunities for growth and development, and it is in this context that the efflorescence of Dogra culture is so welcome. The Dogra region constitutes an important part of Jammu and Kashmir State, but Dogra culture extends into Himachal Pradesh and Punjab also, and therefore its study and development is of special interest.

In these volumes, the authors have concentrated upon three aspects of Dogra culture. The first is Dogri literature, both folk as well as contemporary. This literature is rich and pulsates with the joys and sorrows of the common people. A literature that has grown out of the soil is necessarily close to the hearts of the people, and the last two decades have seen a remarkable renaissance take place in the field of Dogri. We have to-day a number of vigorous writers of prose and poetry who are seeking to express their vision of resurgent India through the medium of Dogri literature.

Pahari art, of course, is well known throughout the world. Museums and art collections the world over are proud to possess specimens of our beautiful Pahari miniatures, so rich in colour and so delicate in detail. Although the peculiar social and economic milieu that gave rise to the Pahari school of painting no longer exists, the paintings themselves are proof of the creative genius that the Dogras can display. Dogra prowess in the battlefield is well known; but no less important is this other side of the Dogra personality in which rhythm and harmony have blended to produce immortal works of miniature painting.

Painting and music are closely allied, and often the paintings themselves portray various Ragas. This brings us to folk music which is another aspect of importance covered in these volumes. The folk-song is the most widely prevalent form of mass entertainment in our countryside, and the haunting melody of Pahari songs adds to the beauty and joy of daily life. Pahari architecture has also been dealt with in these volumes, and information has been given regarding some important archaeological excavations in the heart of the lower Shivalics, specially Bhabhor and Krimchi.

The two volumes thus seek in a short compass to cover a broad spectrum of cultural and artistic activities of the Dogras. It is a commendable effort, and it will have amply served its purpose if it creates in the general public a greater awareness of our cultural heritage, and among scholars a desire to probe deeper into the various aspects covered therein.

Jammu,
March 9, 1965

KARAN SINGH,
SADAR-I-RIYASAT

INTRODUCTION

One has not to go far to seek an elaborate plea for writing a history of literature, which not only keeps on record the literary productions of the past and thus acts as mnemonic against the oblivious effects of time, but also flashes forth a spark of criticism by which the future course of literature, to some extent, may be envisioned and determined. The history of literature treasures up the gems otherwise likely to be lost, which literature drops on its way to evolutionary consummation and assigns them a category corresponding to their native worth. Any history of literature which only sets down a newspaper report of the various books and their authors and neglects to track out the logical currents of thought had better be given the appellation of a catalogue. As literature plunges its fathom-line much below the surface to sound the depth of life, a history of literature should examine the various thought-forces and currents gone to its making, besides furnishing a critical appraisal of its contents.

The need and desirability of writing a brief history of Dogra Art and Literature was realised by one and all, but the difficulties in the closer review of the sundry phases of development, which gives coherence to literary movements and through which Dogri literature has attained to its latest form and eminence, deterred many an enthusiast. The present venture, however, is not in the nature of a masterly and comprehensive project but in the nature of a humble beginning. And like every beginning, this work

is attended on both by its short-comings and some advantages.

The literary traditions in Dogri stretch as far back as the reigns of Maharaja Ranjit Dev and Maharaja Ranbir Singh, when the State emerged from the throes of internicine conflicts and settled down to its peaceful pursuits. The predecessor of Maharaja Ranbir Singh, Maharaja Gulab Singh, could hardly find a breathing space from his martial campaigns to take up literary enterprise. It is, therefore, both fruitful and convenient to make the time of Maharaja Ranbir Singh as a starting point for the present work. The period before that, from the literary point of view, is enveloped in comparative obscurity where only persistent research efforts can avail. Only one poem, 'Killiyâ Battnâ Chhōrī Dittâ' by poet Dattu, belonging to the reign of Raja Ranjit Dev, is available in the written form. Again, it was in Ranbir Singh's time that an attempt was made to instal Dogri as the State's official language. This decision must have given some importance to Dogri language and won its recognition from those people who could not pour scorn on it as they did a couple of years ago. But there seems to have been a dearth of talent in the field of Dogri literature, and save for a few sporadic efforts in the compilation of a Dogri grammar, a manual for drill and some translation works from Sanskrit, much is not available. Recently some prose material has been unearthed by Shri Prashant which shows that prose literature during Maharaja Ranbir Singh's reign had been developed considerably. For a fuller report, reference may be made to Shri Prashant's article 'Development of Dogri Prose' shortly to be published by

Dogri Research Institute. And then, this trickle which oozed out during the reign of Ranbir Singh was lost again in the sands of neglect and remained so till some time before the advent of freedom, when some enthusiasts unearthed it again and reinforced its currents with their versatile contributions. In art, however, the tale is slightly different, because art, like life, does not run on a pre-determined or fixed path, and deviates from the straight course of time. That's why we find much earlier records of the artistic creation of the Dogra land than in the case of literature.

The period of about ninety years intervening between Ranbir Singh's time and the present revival of Dogri literature is again ensconced from view. Some stray and fragmentary pieces by Ganga Dutt and Ram Dhan do pierce the pervading dark. In the pieces available, the felicity of expression, poetic intensity and richness of thought speak of a high excellence which could not have been acquired by single attempt. Poetic genius soars by gradual flights and the field is open for the enterprising to explore and reap a rich harvest of new material, hitherto unknown and unexplored.

The present volume formed a part of the Book, 'A Short History of Dogri Literature and Pahari Art'. Later on, it was felt that the book should be divided into two volumes: the first called 'An Introduction to Dogri Folk Literature and Pahari Art,' and the second as 'An Introduction to Modern Dogri Literature.'

The difficulties in the present undertaking have been many, and they are mainly due to the lack of authentic records. History has never been our strong point, and the desire to remain incognito, coupled

with the intention of identifying oneself with the common folk has made the matters more difficult. The vast and varied crop of folk-songs, with their infinitely rich experiences and their melodic charm may very well be the fruit of joint enterprise, but the mind of some genius can be seen in their composition, although the hand remains unrecognised. Future research, through internal evidence may bring to light some added information, but at present not many traces are found of the literati.

In the present work which was undertaken with a view to recording our past traditions and present achievements a constructive approach has been adopted. Faults and shortcomings have been pointed out, not to damage or destroy the values held dear, nor to stop the present writers from writing, but only to place everything in its proper perspective.

The written literature starts with Devi Ditta, better known as Dattu, because no earlier record of written literature is available. The great risks involved in writing about modern literature and the living writers have not been overlooked ; on the other hand, the consciousness of their presence has enabled the author to be as much objective as possible. Complete objectivity was neither possible nor has it been claimed ; the author lives too near the modern writers and the modern times to profess absolute isolation. Notwithstanding the best efforts, personal predilections and personal prejudices may have crept in, but on the whole, a sincere effort has been made to be fair to all. Moreover, the values and circumstances which inspired the present literature may change, and conse-

quently a revaluation may become necessary. Be it as it may, this should not detract from the desirability of writing 'An Introduction to Modern Dogri Literature'.

An attempt has been made to define the boundaries of Dogra land in connection with Dogri literature which does not conform strictly to the rigid map work, for in literature as also in art, true boundaries are determined by the similarity of culture, language and sentiments rather than by the cold rule of guage and meter. Art or literature regards no parochial limits. Its own dividing lines, which are either the different modes of expression, or the various methods of treatment, are not inflexible but only help a convenient classification of its rich variety, and at bottom are strung together by its one indivisible spirit. Hence it is that the folk songs of 'Kūñjū and Chanchalō', and other songs, which are famous in Jammu as also in Kangra and Chamba, form as much a part of Dogri literature as the poems written by poets like Awara and Sudarshan Kaushal and Harish Padre. Study of literature or art in a particular language or medium with a dogged allegiance to its regional confines may turn up only an ill-done affair, as similar trends of thoughts and expression may possibly be in vogue across them, and their excision from such a work which professes to record them cannot be vindicated. English works written outside England are as good a part of English literature as those produced in its soil. In the present book the geographical boundaries have not been slighted, but they have been overlooked wherever they threatened to impinge upon the emotional unity and scope of this present venture, as there is much of Duggar even

beyond its accepted lines. Certain areas may belong to different states politically, but the spirit manifest in their cultural and linguistic operations is unmutilated.

I have tried to give references in as many foot-notes as possible, but mention has had to be made about many an unpublished work. Because the book is meant primarily for average readers, the scheme of transliteration adopted is not a very technical one: the signs adopted in the Concise Oxford Dictionary have been used to convey some sounds and pronunciations. No mention has been made of Bansi Lal Gupta's 'Dogri Language And Grammar,' and 'Dogri Lexicon' which is being compiled by Hans Raj Pandotra at New Delhi and Shyam Lal Sharma at Jammu, because they did not fall within the purview of this book. A bibliography has been given in which some of the manuscripts have also been mentioned. Due to the short time in which this book had to be printed, it has not been possible to prepare the Index, but the contents have been so arranged that a reader can get a fair idea of the writers writing in the different fields of Dogri—poetry, prose, short-story, drama and novel.

I have tried to steer clear from the controversy about Dogri and its origin. This is an issue which has been exhaustively dealt with by Prof. Lakshmi Narain in 'An Introduction to Dogri Folk Literature and Pahari Art'. I have mentioned in passing that the origin of Dogri is from Prakrit which gave rise to Sanskrit. Some scholars are of the view that Sanskrit gave rise to Prakrit. Be it as it may, we are here concerned with the origin of Dogri, and most of the

scholars agree that the origin of Dogri is from Prakrit.

Between the writing of the present volume and its actual publication, a period of about three years has elapsed. Some fateful events took place in the intervening period like the Chinese aggression and the unfortunate death of Shri Jawahar Lal Nehru. Some new poets and writers have also appeared on the literary scene, and the older ones made valuable additions to their stock. The book has had to be revised, and the additional details given in the Postscript. If any writer or poet has not been mentioned in the book, the omission is purely inadvertent.

I owe my thanks to the Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages under whose auspices this book has been published.

I also wish to express my deep sense of gratitude to Dr. Karan Singh Ji, Sadar-i-Riyasat, who has encouraged us by very kindly writing the Foreword to this volume as well as the preceding volume, "An Introduction to Dogri Folk Literature and Pahri Art." The writing of this book has been a knotty affair, but due to the good-will of Sarvashri Ram Nath Shastri, D. C. Parshant, Dinoo Bhai Pant, Anant Ram Shastri, Madhukar and Bansi Lal Gupta, the work has been brought to a definite conclusion. I wish to thank them all. My thanks are also due to Principal Hassan Shah for going through the manuscript of this volume and offering some useful suggestions.

If this venture, notwithstanding its short-comings,

(h)

can goad our writers and scholars to work more on the linguistic and literary aspects of Dogri, and if it creates in the general public a greater awareness of Dogri language and literature, I shall feel amply compensated for my labours.

Nilamber Dev Sharma

Scheme of Transliteration.

â as in Part, mart

ā as in mate, fate

ī as in kind and also in ghaṛī (watch)

i as in king

ē as in mete, geet (song)

e as in pet

ō as in mote

ōō as in moot, Phōōl (flower)

ū as in mute, also in Phūll (flower), Dūggar.

u as in bud, absurd

ṇ as in round, raṅgmaṅch (stage)

ṛ as in ghaṛī (watch), khiṛki (window)

āī as in ghairat (prestige)

au as in aur (and), fauji (army man)

PART

I

SOCIAL SETTING

In every language, as in every culture, there is a period which is termed as Renaissance or Revivalism. The last twenty five years are the years of Renaissance of Duggar, its art, literature and culture. What is that Renaissance and what were its causes and effects?

The people living in Jammu Province in Kashmir State are generally called Dogras. They have a distinct language, a distinct tradition, and a distinct mode of social living, distinct habits and customs. Dogri has its independent existence and origin. Its origin is from Prakrit which gave rise to Sanskrit. Dogri has sweetness and charm of its own. Then there is the sweetness and melody of Pahari music and the artistic perfection and grandeur of Dogra-Pahari paintings.

This consciousness of the Dogras about their rich heritage in music, paintings and language was never so sharp and pronounced as it has become during the past twenty five years. Even before, in the reign of Raja Ranjit Dev, there was a great poet, Dattu, whose only poem in Dogri starting with :

Killiyâ Battnâ Chõřī dittâ

(I have stopped going out alone) is one of the best compositions in the language. The reign of Maharaja Ranbir Singh saw Dogri as the official language of this region, but unfortunately, there were not many great literary figures at that time who wrote in Dogri. The only one name is that of Ganga Ram, whose "Kandī Dâ Basnâ" (Life in Kandi) shows a

richness and maturity of its author. There was L. Ram Dhan, whose stray pieces of poetry are available and the best of them is 'Hasnâ, Khednâ'. L. Ram Dhan lived in the time of Maharaja Pratap Singh. After that, for many years, there seems no activity for the uplift of Dogri, and there are many gaps in the intervening years between the reigns of Raja Ranjit Dev and Maharaja Pratap Singh.

This indifference of the Dogras towards their art, culture and language is responsible for the lack of written material, which stands in the way of a proper evaluation of the history of this region and its language. Dogras are famous all the world over for their bravery. They distinguished themselves in the art of paintings which brought distinction not only to the Dogras but which raised the name and fame of the whole movement of paintings in India. In the words of famous art critics, Mr. G W. Archer and Mr. O. C. Ganguli¹, these Dogra-Pahari paintings represent the culminating point in the art of India and form its precious treasure. The contributions of Pahārī Dūrgā Rââg to the Indian music, as also of the folk songs, folk literature and folk dances to the enrichment of Indian life and culture, are great indeed. Due to extension of educational facilities and the growing freedom movement in the country, people were becoming more alive to their problems. The British rule and English language were considered foreign. They must go. But what next? National Government. And what about its composition,

1. For fuller details see Part II, Vol. I of the book
—by Sansar Chand Sharma.

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and what about the national language? This controversy was more political and Hindi or Urdu were brought into this controversy. Efforts were made to develop and enrich Hindi and show that it could be the national language of India. Together with this feeling, the feeling for regional languages, the mother tongues, began to take roots in the people's minds. Whereas Hindi could be the official language of the country, the working of the States' administration and education at school and even university level, should be carried on in the regional languages. The richness of Bengali, Marathi, Gujrati, Tamil and Talegu inspired the people living in other parts of India to develop and enrich their regional languages—Assamese, Oriya, Punjabi, Kashmiri, etc.

Situated as Jammu is between Punjab and Kashmir (in so far as its linguistic aspect is concerned), it could not but be influenced by such movements. There were many sensitive minds in Duggar who were touched to the quick on seeing their art and culture derided. What had they to be ashamed of? They had given excellent warriors to the country, rich store-house of paintings; their music and folk literature had proved their mark. Even in the domain of architecture and sculpture such as Kirmchi, Babore (Pusmasta), Mansar, Mohargarh, Reasi and Poonch proved, they had not lagged behind. Why should they hesitate in assuming the greatness of their art and culture which truly belonged to them? It was no use to be isolated, to feel they were in any way inferior to other cultural groups of India. The only thing was that they were not properly organised, their achievements were not well-publicised.

Dogri Sanstha : With these objectives, the Dogri Sanstha was formed in Jammu in 1943. There was Hindi Sahitya Mandal which was working for spreading literary activities, and young and talented writers were participating in its meetings, reading and reciting their stories and poems. Bhârati and Ūshâ were the two monthly magazines published earlier. Majority of the members of Hindi Sahitya Mandal, Prof. Ram Nath Shastri, Dinoo Bhai Pant, Prashant, Bhagwat Prasad Sathe, Sham Lal Sharma, Bansi Lal Gupta, Tej Ram Khajuria, Shankuntala Seth, Sheela Tuli, Chand Malhotra were Dogri-speaking people. They felt that they had to do their duty by their mother tongue, Dogri, as much as they had to do towards Hindi, the national language. Hardatt was the first to write Dogri poetry and he was not alone. Dinoo Bhai Pant too wrote poems in Dogri. Bhagwat Prasad Sathe and Vishwa Nath Khajuria wrote short-stories. These activities of Hindi and Dogri continued side by side in a harmonious way, although some of the communal and opportunist elements tried to sow the seeds of disharmony and discord between the two.

Political Scene : And then India became free. In 1947, there was a peculiar state of affairs. Kashmir, along with Hyderabad and Junagadh, did not accede either to India or Pakistan. The communal situation was getting worse, and trouble was inspired in Poonch by Pakistani elements. State troops were divided in their loyalty. The result of communal tension and political uncertainty led to some very unfortunate and untoward incidents. The house was divided

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against itself, brother was fighting brother. In Mirpur, Poonch, Bhimber, Rajouri and Kotli, a bloody drama was played by the locals, armed with Pakistani weapons and inspired by Pakistani agents and troops. In Kashmir, Muzaffarabad fell to Pakistani raiders who were advancing towards Srinagar at a great speed. In Jammu Province and other adjoining areas, Hindu communalism was at its worst. The then Maharaja Hari Singh applied to India for accession. Indian troops were despatched.

The situation was precarious. Troops and militia could fight the external enemy, but what about the enemy inside? People were to be organised. People were fed up with the communal politics of Hindu Sabha, R. S. S. and Muslim Conference which were responsible for the bloody bath. They wanted peace and security; they were feeling sorry for the recent unfortunate happenings.

At this juncture, the young group of professors and students, of artists and writers, came into the forefront. They were the persons who could inspire and enthuse the people by their example of service and self-sacrifice, and by their creative work. Dogri Sanstha threw its lot with the national movement, led by the National Conference and forming a united front of all the nationalist and patriotic elements of the State. "The Only Way," a pamphlet, was issued by the Dogri Sanstha, defining its role and policy in the emergency situation. Support of the United front led by National Conference was its slogan. It was opposed by the communal section, but its opposition was too feeble to resist the tidal wave

of people's zeal for national security. The feelings of anger and indignation, let loose by the failure of the feudalistic system, were channelled into healthy and constructive activities. Professor Triloki Nath, Professor Ram Nath Shastri, Dinoo Bhai Pant and Prashant did a wonderful job. They were inspired by the noble example of late Dhanwantri who understood and encouraged the aspirations of the people. Feelings of class and community were fast fading and Srinivas Shah, Paras Ram Nagar, Sansar Chand Baru, Nazir Hussain Samnani, Om Saraf, and others did all they could to create national solidarity. The younger group, consisting mainly of students—Balraj Puri, Ved Pal Deep, Ved Bhasin, Yash Sharma, Ram Nath Mengi, Prem Saraf and Nilamber..... lent able support to the national and cultural movement. They went from place to place and created an awakening among different sections of the people.

In 1948, a Political Conference was held at Tikri, a place 33 miles from Jammu, in which Dogri Sanstha also took part. Bâwâ Jitto, the first play in Dogri, written by Professor Ram Nath Shastri was staged. 'Kud', a folk dance, was also arranged and a Paintings Exhibition was also organised. This was the first occasion in Jammu's history when three different aspects of Dogra culture—music, literature and paintings—were presented before the people. This was followed by a big exhibition of paintings, held at Jammu in 1949. The exhibition was a collection of beautiful and rare pieces of Dogra-Phari School, which made the people realise the rich heritage they possessed and about which they were ignorant for so long. This love for their coun-





युवकों को अपने देश की ओर आकर्षित करने का क्यूस (दक्षिणी जापान) चेम्बर आफ कामर्स नया तरीका अपनाया है। वहां युवतियाँ आकर्षक वेशभूषा में सड़कों पर परेड कर रही हैं



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try and their culture led to the revival of nostalgic memories of the past and a sense of patriotism in literature.

Rise of Dogri : When political workers had to go to different villages to mobilise the people for various constructive purposes, a sense of kinship strangely dawned upon both the workers and the people. Those people, who were considered ignorant and illiterate, who had no schooling whatever, curiously enough, responded in a very live manner when the workers addressed them in Dogri, whereas their speeches in Hindi or Urdu left them comparatively unmoved. This new realisation brought about a shifting of balance, a readjustment of values. Dinoo Bai Pant, Ram Nath Shastri, Ved Deep, Yash Sharma and others started writing in Dogri with greater zeal and force. Kishan Smailpuri and Parmanand Almast joined their ranks. And when the poets went to different towns and villages and recited their Dogri poems, local writers also started writing in Dogri.

Patriotism in Dogri Poetry : Fired by new love for their country, these poets composed songs in its praise. Love for Duggar was expressed in their songs by almost every poet; these songs, in turn, filled the minds of their listeners with admiration and respect for the glory and grandeur of their land. Short poems and songs would be effective where long, complicated speeches did not impress. Being the product of emergency conditions, poetry began to be written by an ever-increasing number of poets to voice their sentiments of patriotism. A patriotic song in praise of Duggar was composed, similar to the idea and tune of India's national

anthem :

Surge naiyâ Des Dògrâ, aide Gāi Gūn Gââge

(This land of Duggar is like heaven ; we shall sing in its praise). The affinity between the different regions of the State—Kashmir, Bhaderwah, Ladakh—was proved with Jammu and, therefore, no sacrifice would be too great to defend its honour and integrity.

Pt. Hardatt, who was imbued with the same patriotic colours, but who felt upset at the indolence and inertia of Duggar and its people, wrote a song exhorting them to shake off their lethargy :

O, Dògre Desâ, Kiyân gūjârâ terâ h.ōg.

(Oh, Dogra land : How would you get on in this world ?) All the countries,—nay the whole world,—are awake. You are caught in a deep slumber. It is no time for slumber. Wake up ; open your eyes.

Dinoo Bhai Pant in his Véér Gūlâb had already expressed in 1946 the determination of Dogras to defend the land of their ancestors. No one should bring bad name to Duggar, no coward should go into the battle-field.

In another poem, Dinoo sings the praise of Duggar which is protected by the high mountains of the Pir Panchal, where green meadows and fields add to its beauty, and fruit and flowers abound. History is full of the deeds of its brave warriors and its sages and philosophers.¹ In yet another song, Dinoo exhorts his listeners to gaze at the beauty of his land with the

¹ Mera Des

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poet's eyes ; only then can they appreciate it, for its beauty is not less than that of the heavenly abode: "Mere Desâ dâ Shalepâ meri akhîn kanne dikh".

Krishan Smailpuri goes a step further : why talk of heaven ? why not sing of the glories of his land (Duggar)

The love for Duggar gradually embraced Dogras in its fold. The poets sang songs in the praise of simple, unsophisticated, yet handsome and brave Dogras. They must gird up their loins to protect their country from the invaders. Sometimes the love of the poet for Duggar was combined with his love for his people in one song, as in the poems of Smailpuri, Almast, Dinoo, Balkrishana Sharma, Deep and Yash, and later on, in the poems of Ram Nath Shastri, Shamboo Nath, Madhukar, and others. In his poem "Dōgre²", Deep eulogised the Dogras who are peace-loving. Just as in the garden, the flower-beds are the most conspicuous thing, and even among flowers, jasmine is the most attractive flower, in the same way, of all countries, India is the best one, and Duggar is its best constituent.

In the form of a duet, a man and his wife sing of their determination to save their land from aggression. This song, 'Duggar Des bachânâ, meri jînde'; (We have to defend Duggar, my love) is written by Yash Sharma. Sometimes there was a risk that chauvinistic sentiments might be exploited. Thakur Raghunath Singh's song "*Lâinî Kashmîr Kiyân*"

(How we conquered Kashmir), written in a forceful style and giving examples from history, proved the bravery of Dogras, but the feeling bordered on chauvinism. This feeling was countered by Yash Sharma in "Dġtti Kashmġr Kġyaġ" (How Kashmir was surrendered). In a more rational mood, Dinoo Bhai Pant was filled with curious feelings: "Lġk mġġnġ mġrde eh Dġgreġ dġ rġj Ō"¹ (People revile us, is this the rule of Dogras). Although the people criticized the "Dogra rule", it, in fact, was as much a domination of handful of persons over Dogras, as it was over other sections of the State. The saner element in Kashmir should not be misled by the word Dogra, which, in the case of a feudalistic system, was a misnomer¹.

Economic Scene : In the first flush of patriotic zeal, which was created by the foreign aggression, a common cause was made and all the differences of rich and poor were submerged. All were Dogras, and their common goal was to preserve Duggar's unity. But as the situation became more stable, and as the economic conflict became sharper, cracks in that united front began to appear. The poets, as the most sensitive members of the national movement, were the first to voice their protest against this front of the completely opposed and unreal groups—the haves and the have-nots. Even earlier, Dinoo Bhai Pant had given a clarion call to the workers and the peasants to wake up from their age-old slumber. Their time had come. The rich land-lord,

¹ Jago Duggar.

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the money-lender, had created a hoax about (the fear of) God. Time had come to demolish this hoax of the vested interests.² The song reminds one of Shelley's 'Song To The Men Of England'; but the imagery used in the poem is typically Indian. In another poem "Bāirā" (Unyoked Bull), Dinoo lashed his whip at the capitalists who thrived on the exploitation of the poor workers. The time of writing those patriotic songs, which were in many respects divorced from the actual reality of the land, had gone. New social realism was replacing idealistic out-bursts of patriotism.

Ved Pal Deep, Shambu Nath, Almast, Basant Ram, Yash Sharma, Tara Smailpuri, Padma Sharma, Ram Nath Shastri became the mouth-organs of this new socio-economic realism in Dogri poetry. In revolutionary zeal, Kishan Smailpuri sang : "We will subvert the times where hunger, poverty and disease reign".¹ Almast burst out; you cannot go to heaven by playing fraud upon others. The true way is the one taught by Gandhi Ji². Chuni Lal Kamla, who was better known as a Panjabi poet, wrote about the Life of Peasants³. Balkrishan Sharma appealed to the workers and peasants to shake off their lethargy and prepare themselves for building a new social order³. In his "Namī Azādi"³ (New Freedom) Ved Deep wished that the Goddess of

2 Uth Majoorā Jag Kasānā in Jago Duggar.

1. Prat Kīran : Portion of Samailpuri,
Ed by Tara Samailpuri

2. Jago Duggar . Swarg naiñ Jāan Oñdā

3. Jago Duggar

Liberty should forsake the rich mansions and live among the poor peasants. They were long defrauded by clever people; now it is her duty to bring a new message of hope to them. In a mood of revolt, Yash Sharma felt that for ordinary people, there were roads and streets; for the rich were palatial buildings¹. By implication, or by direct appeals, the poets meant to change this social order where inequality prevailed. Attention of the readers was also drawn towards the villages and villagers. How could a country progress if its inhabitants were subjected to misery? People living in Kandi area found their voice in Taramani, whose "Kandî dâ Basnâ" (Life in Kandi) is very similar to Ganga Ram's poem of the same title. The inspiration to write this poem might have been got from Ganga Ram's poem, yet the style and the force and imagery in the poem are Tara Smailpurî's own.

To attract the attention of the people, to educate them, poetic symposia were organised. The impact was two-fold. The audience were impressed by the richness and variety of their own language; their appreciation of the poets, of their poems, and sometimes their indifference, educated the poets about what the people wanted, and what they should give them. This contact enriched the contents of their poetry, gave a touch of authenticity. Moreover, these symposia helped in the blossoming of new talents and in maturing the genius of the old ones.

Role of Radio Station : Radio Station was set

¹ Jagō Duggar

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up in Jammu in 1948. Its main aims were to inform the people about the day-to-day situation in the battle-field, to keep up their morale, to educate them about the happenings around their circle and in the outside world. It was also meant to cater to the cultural needs of the people, and Dogri being the regional language, many of the programmes broadcast were in Dogri. To look to the real needs of the people, to make them understand the talks and speeches broadcast from the Radio, it was necessary to utilise the services of able and efficient writers. The world of Radio has its own laws and regulations, and these coupled with the practical requirements of the people, created a new type of literature which was suited to the people's taste but not to the exclusion of literary merits. You could not always broadcast poems, patriotic songs; people sometimes wanted to listen to the speakers for their views on agriculture, rural development, about their ancient culture, folk tales and folk songs. Sometimes songs sung on the radio would please them but they would not suffice. They would like to know something about these songs, about the folk dances, about fairs, festivals, and about the modern world, with all its complicated problems.

This new trend, which was chiefly the creation of the Radio, gave rise to the much-desired, though long-neglected form of literature—prose literature. Hitherto all the work had been done in verse; folk songs living in the people's memories were recorded, written and published. Folk tales were rather unfortunate. Radio made up for this lack, and people started paying more attention to Dogri prose. Folk

tales were collected and published by Bansi Lal Gupta and by Dogri Sanstha.

Writers started writing articles, reviews and gradually the modern Dogri short-story came into existence. Even before the Radio Station, Bhagwat Prasad Sathe had published short-stories but he was the solitary example, and some of his short-stories fell short of the technique and plot of the modern short-stories. Ram Nath Shastri had written the first Dogri play, 'Bâwâ Jittô' which was staged at Tikri and Dhâr. Mr. D. C. Prasahant also wrote a play on Jitto. Vishwa Nath Khajuria wrote prose and short-stories. But the process of the prose writing was considerably accelerated by Jammu Radio. The remuneration to write and read articles, talks, one-act plays also acted as an incentive. The result was that new writers came into the field whose interest was in writing prose alone. The one-act plays of Ram Nath Shastri and Prashant were broadcast by Jammu Radio which were sufficiently liked. The prose pieces of Vishwa Nath Khajuria, Sham Lal Sharma, Shakti Sharma, Pt. Ganga Nath, Pt. Raghu Nath Shastri, Pt. Madan Mohan Shastri (the last two wrote on Sanskrit Literature and Astrology); short-stories of Sushila Khajuria, Madan Mohan Sharma, Kavi Rattan, were written for and broadcast from Jammu Radio. Dogri Sanstha, Jammu, with the help of Dogra Mandal, New Dehli started a quarterly "Namî Chetnâ (New Awakening) in which articles, stories, one-act plays, criticism, and reviews were published in and on Dogri. This magazine was really symbolic of a new awakening which was taking place in Duggar. Much work was done by Dogri Sanstha and yet more remained to be done.

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Dogra Mandal, Jammu, was formed to supplement the activities and work of Dogri Sanstha. Its president, Pt. Anant Ram Shastri, wrote in Dogri. Dogra Mandal did a creditable job in arranging photographic exhibitions of the historical places of Duggar; it also published a few books and did useful work in salvaging some old pieces of sculpture. The old school of painting was revived in the artistic creations of Pt. Sansar Chand. He was joined by Master Hem Raj, Mr. Chandu Lal, Devi Dass, Dev Datt, Om Sharma and Vidya Rattan Khajuria, Vidya Rattan is the first painter in Jammu to incorporate the old and the new styles in his paintings, and the first to experiment successfully in Cubism and colour abstractions.

Academic and Educational Scene. In 1953, Ram Nath Shastri wrote a pamphlet "Arguments in favour of Dogri as the Medium of Instruction." Shastri Ji gave many arguments which were advanced by the protagonists of the movement for the spread of mother-tongues and regional languages in other parts of India. There was no question of rivalry between Hindi and Dogri, Hindi being the national language of India; Urdu was the official language of the State. Dogri, which is spoken by the majority of Jammu people, should be adopted as the medium of instruction in the primary stages in Jammu province. Those who did not want to learn Dogri or whose mother-tongue was not Dogri, could learn Panjabi or any other language they chose to learn. Later on, a Committee was formed to go into this matter which submitted its

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report to the Government in 1954. Dogri and Kashmiri were accepted as compulsory subjects to be taught in the primary stages; and they should be developed further to fulfil the educational needs and requirements at all levels. Some people vainly tried to revive the controversy between Hindi and Dogri. Dinoo Pant gave a rejoinder to these detractors in his famous and forceful poem "Dâddi te Mân" (Grand-mother and Mother). Hindi was like our grandma whom we love and respect but mother is mother. There was absolutely no reason nor scope to sow seeds of disruption, and the people should learn both Hindi and Dogri. Cultural Organisations had helped a lot in creating a cultural movement in Jammu Province. People had been made fully aware of their heritage and they were lending their moral support to this movement.

Dogra Art Gallery : Some pieces of sculpture, some artistic designs and patterns on cloth, some arms used in the battlefield by Dogra warriors were collected by Dogri Sanstha which had also a rare collection of beautiful paintings. All these were surrendered to the Government in order to preserve them in some museum. With this objective Dogra Art Gallery was formed which has since then been doing a valuable job in the field of art.

Cultural Academy : In 1958, the Sadar-i-Riyasat by an ordinance set up an Academy of Art, Culture and Languages with a view to bringing about co-ordination between the various Academies function-

[^]Dâddi te Mân[^] published by Dogri Sanstha.

ing in the field of music, art and literature, and to promote the growth and development of the regional Language of the State. The Academy, under the patronage of the Sadar-i-Riyasat, Dr. Karan Singh Ji, has done a very useful work in focusing the attention of the people on their cultural heritage. It has also helped in publishing a large number of books in the various languages by giving subsidy to the authors and by undertaking the publication of about fifty books.

In Dogri, the Academy has published a set of five books on the contemporary poetry and Dōgrī Khâvat Kōsh, Ikkī Khâniyân, Ekōtrashatī, Gītañjalī, and Sârâ Sâhitya. Under the inspiring guidance of its Patron, Dr. Karan Singh Ji, the Academy has an ambitious project to popularize the Durga-Pahari music by setting up a Music School at Jammu.

The role of Dr. Karan Singh in the up-lift of Dogra Culture is not an ordinary one. He has not only patronised the poets by holding Dogri Mushaira every year on Eaisakhi Day in his Palace; he has himself translated into English some 25 Dogri songs, mostly folk-songs, in his book "Sunlight and the Shadow", with their Hindi translation by Prof. R.N. Shastri and notation by Shri Uma Dutt Sharma. Of late, Dr. Karan Singh has surprised everyone by writing devotional songs in Dogri and composing their music. The tunes have a haunting melody which match with the simple grandeur of the words of the poems. His private collection of Dogra-Pahari paintings is one of the best in the world and amply proves the deep love and interest he has in the artistic traditions of the Duggar.

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Prose : The writers and readers realised the comparative dearth of Dogri Prose. No language could be called mature and developed which lacked in this vital branch of literature. There were very few prose works some five years ago—Sathe's Pehlâ Phull, Shastri's Bâwâ Jittō, a few stories, Prashant's Jittō and some stories, Bansi Lal Gupt's collection of Folk-tales, but now definite efforts were made to write in Dogri prose. The result has been very encouraging. Books for children were written; essays by Shri Sham Lal Sharma, Shri Tej Ram Khajuria, Vishwa Nath Khajuria, Laxami Narain and stories by Lalita Mehta, Ved Rahi, Madan Mohan Sharma, Ram Kumar Abrol, Narender Khajuria, Nilamber and Kavi Rattan were written. In the writings of Ved Rahi, Madan Mohan Sharma and Ram Kumar Abrol, the influences of Urdu short-story (Afsânâ) can be seen, for originally all the three writers were, and still are, the writers of Urdu afsana. Kavi Rattan has a sensitive mind but he has to develop his art. In Nilamber's stories, the influence of English literature is visible. Narender Khajuria lives in a rural atmosphere and he thinks and writes in Dogri. His style is fine and the material of his stories is rich. His stories have an atmosphere of realism. There are some youngsters writing in College magazines. Shambu Nath has also written in prose.

Drama : The tradition of play-writing is not very old in Jammu although stage has a much older tradition. Now the writers of Dogri are paying attention to writing plays and most of them have been successful on stage. "Namâ Grân" (New Village) which bears

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he joint authorship of Dinoo Bhai Pant, Ram Nath Shastri and Ram Kumar Abrol—is a good stage-play but its literary merits are not so pronounced. Dinoo's "Sarpanch," based on the sacrifice of Dâtâ Ranû, is a powerful play, with forceful and crisp dialogues, distinct characterisation and well-constructed plot. "Sanjâli" is his other play. Ram Nath Shastri's "Sââr" deals with an era in Dogri history when poetry and painting flourished. Ved Rahi's "Dhârên de Athrôo" is a play with a strong social theme although it is weak in dialogue and construction. Prashant has written "Devkâ" dealing with a mythological theme. He, Shastri and Narendra Khajuria have written one-act plays as well. Ram Kumar has written 'Dheri'.

By now Dogri has reached a stage when much more extensive work can and ought to be undertaken to bring it at par with the other regional languages of India. Dogri poetry has reached a stage when new experiments and new ventures are needed. Shastri, Deep, Tara Smailpuri, Madhukar, Dinoo Pant, Randhir Singh, Ram Krishen Shastri, Durga Datt Shastri, Mohan Lal Sapolia, Charan Singh, Ram Lal Sharma, Roomal Singh, Balkrishan Udhamपुरi, Dhayan Singh are trying new experiments and are keeping pace with the literary movements in other languages of India; they are also informed of the new trends in world literature. Madhukar, Deep, Randhir, Tara Smailpuri and Onkar Singh Awara are creating new symbols and new modes to express new values and new ideas in literature. All this augurs well for Dogri. But will the pace be maintained? We can only hope and wait.

CHAPTER II

EARLY POETS

Devi Ditta (Dattu) was born in the village of Bhaddu in Basohli Tehsil some two centuries ago. Basohli was then ruled by Raja Prithipal Singh and at Jammu, Raja Ranjit Dev, the famous warrior-politician, reigned. The Prince of Jammu, Braj Dev, was a friend of Raja Prithpal, and it was through their influence that Dattu came to Jammu and stayed there for twenty-eight years.

There are many tales famous about Dattu. One of them says that Dattu was a slow-witted person, but due to the blessings of his Guru, Suraj Narain, he became very intelligent and started writing poems in Braj Bhasha. "Vīr Vīlās," and "Bârâ Mâh" and "Kamal Netra Satōtra" (which is famous all over northern India) are some of his well-known compositions in Braj Bhasha.

But his fame in Dogri rests on a solitary poem "Killiyâ Battanâ Chhōṛi dittâ" (I have stopped going to the well all alone to bring water). Dattu lived in Basohli two centuries ago, but his language was the same as it was spoken in Jammu, and is as fresh as it now is. That it still wears the charm of newness is a tribute to the highly-developed genius of the poet and the versatility of the Dogri language.

The poem is a gem in the art of lyricism. It is simple and direct and the rhythm, which is slow describes graphically the sad state of a young bride who has to suffer at the hands of her mother-in-law,

sister-in-law and the village people because they attribute certain stories to her which are not true. To silence their criticism, she has stopped going out all alone; she brings drinking water in company. Cursed be the village of Gangtha (Kangra in Punjab) whose people deliberately blame the innocent people. How can be one light-hearted or speak to some-one without creating a scandal? Devi Datta should advise her how she should win over her mother-in-law and sister-in-law to herself¹.

The lyric has condensed the story in a nutshell. It has a musical quality. It vividly portrays the humiliated feeling of a young bride, and the psychology of the garrulous villagers who are always prepared to attribute motives on the flimsiest ground; it also depicts the age-old rivalry of the mother-in-law and the sister-in-law for the young bride. This rivalry is present in the literature of many Indian languages. The lyric is a fine example of the art of the omission of the unessential. Every word is adequate and contributes to the development of the thought and situation in the poem.

No other poems of Dattu are traced yet, but it is highly improbable that he wrote only one poem and achieved such prominence in the matter of style, expression, language and thought. Further efforts may be able to unearth some more material about Dattu's life and works.

Shiv Ram was the son of Nand Ram, the

¹ ¹ ¹
1. Niharika: Ed. by Ram Nath Shastri, a Cultural Academy publication, 1959. See portion on Dattu.

younger brother of Devi Ditta. He was also a poet, and probably wrote some verses in Braj Bhasha. One of his poems, a mixture of Dogri and Braj Basha—is still available. It is an invocation to Goddess Gauri, the consort of Lord Shiva. It has neither the finish nor the maturity of Dattu¹.

Trilochan¹, the grandson of Dattu, translated a portion of the Mahâbhârta under the title of Nêeti-Vinôd.

Rudra Datt¹ was the grandson of Nand Ram, the younger brother of poet Dattu. One incomplete portion of his poem in Dogri has been found. The style, and the metre of the poem, are like those of a poem in Braj Bhasha. The poem alludes to the rule of Raja Ranbir Singh, and how the horse-sellers came from Kandhar and got huge prices for their horses. The result was that whereas the good horses of the locals would be disposed of for trinkets, the foreigners sold their good-for-nothing horses for fabulous amounts. The poem has the sweetness of the Braj Bhasha, and is a conscious effort imitate it in Dogri language. The poem also throws some light on the rule and personality of Maharaja Ranbir Singh. In this respect it is an important poem,

VEM DAV, a distant relation of Dattu was also a poet of Braj Bhasha.

Pt. Ganga Ram (1777 A. D.—1858 A. D.) was a contemporary of Late Maharaja Ranbir Singh. He was a great scholar of Sanskrit language, literature

1. See Niharika[^] Ed. by Ramnath Shastri.

and Hindu law. The rulers of Mandi and Kangra adopted him as their Guru. When Maharaja Ranbir Singh heard about him, he personally went to Kangra and brought him to Jammu and made him the incharge of Sanskrit Pathshala. He translated Sanskrit books into Hindi and his Rânbîr Prâishchat (Penance of Ranbir) is a big volume of over 1000 pages. Along with his Sanskrit works, Pt. Ganga Datt wrote poems in Braj Bhasha. Only one of his poems in Dogri has been salvaged which was recited to Professor Ram Nath Shastri by Pt. Sant Ram Vedpathi.

The poem shows the same richness and maturity of language and contents which we find in Dattu's famous lyric "Killiyâ Battnâ." It has some authentic and moving descriptions of the life in Kandi (arid areas of Jammu).

The poet was born in that arid area of Jammu Province where people have to go for miles to get drinking water. The barley fields have to be guarded against the beasts which destroy crops. The lines have all the force and vitality which was required to convey vividly the life and hardships of the Kandi people. It is a memorable picture, different in mood and atmosphere from Dattu's famous poem, but very much similar to that in skill and authenticity. We are quite aware of the difficulties which Kandi people have to face even in the present, advanced age, and the description is true to it in many respects; but it must have been very true to the conditions obtaining therein in those days. Pt. Ganga Ram was born and brought up in Kandi and, therefore, he knew well

the hardships of the inhabitants of that region, It describes the day-to-day life, and the portrayal is very intimate. The imagery of the fields and the domestic scene where the cattle are living under the same roof where other inmates of the house live is a powerful one. The tone is colloquial and familiar, which shows Dogri's great traditions and its living vigour. But, at the same time, there is a love for the land which is deep-rooted and which is proved by the regret over the difficulties of the people (see Nihârikâ, a Cultural Academy Publication, 1959, pages 25-26).

This one poem alone has carved a place of pride for Ganga Ram in Dogri literature. Tara Samailpuri seems evidently to have been inspired by this poem in his longer poem on the life in Kandi in the present day.

L. Ram Dhan lived in Akhnoor (Jammu Province) during the reign of late Maharaja Pratap Singh. He was a goldsmith by profession although nobody saw him working on his smithy. Some people also thought that he used to make kites (for flying). Ramdhan had an impressive bearing.

He used to write poetry in Dogri, Panjabi and Poorbi languages (Braj Bhasha), but unfortunately most of his poems are lost to us. Even in his Panjabi and Poorbi poetry, the influence of local dialect and language is visible. After reading his Punjabi and Hindi verses, one comes to know that he was very clever at describing the incidents and details of his time. From his poetry it becomes clear that he wrote from a reformer's angle. His approach was sympathetic

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to the current problems but sometimes elements of comedy and satire are also present in his writings. The comic elements can be seen in the lines where the poet refers to the visit to the Holy Ganges for a dip because women like Titlu, Bindlu and Ramditta's mother are also going there¹.

In Dogrī, however, Ram Dhan is known as the author of "Channā dī Chāṇḍnī" a poem which is divided into four parts, independent of each other in length, subject and mood, but related to each other by the last verse of the first part, which is appended to every other part at the end. The poem shows Ram Dhan as a mature person who is well-conversant with the problems of the world. We glimpse Ram Dhan as a romantic poet, as a poet of domestic life who understands the hopes and disappointments of a young married woman, the irritating nature of the mother-in-law, and also as a religious poet.

The first part shows Ram Dhan as a poet of love. There are some romantic touches but it is the romance of a couple, and the words are those of a married woman. Love is sweet but it brings problems as well which you cannot escape. The ways of love are strange; indeed, you have to hang yourself with a fine thread. Sometimes you create difficulties by your own efforts. The knot which you make becomes so baffling that you have to untie it with your teeth. But why grumble? Just as moon-light cannot be separated from the moon, they have to live together, for weal and for woe. As such why should one use harsh words?¹

1. Nihārikā: See portion on Ram Dhan, a Cultural Academy Publication, 1959.

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The poem shows the commonsense approach but it is sublimated by fine romantic feelings, a versatility and command over his medium and the subtlety of meaning which becomes apparent only on second reading.

The second part shows Ram Dhan as a poet of domestic life. The domestic imagery of spinning over the wheels, of working hard and carrying the heaps of grass, is adequate to portray the feelings. The appeal to Lord God also describes the domestic environment. The reference to the spinning wheel shows a life which one lives inside the house, the reference to grass creates the imagery of fields, of working outside the house. The rhythm indicates these two sets of living as also the annoyance which the young bride feels over doing those things which she was not prepared for. But now nothing can be done; their lives are inseparable from each other. The approach of the poet is sympathetic and there are touches of veiled humour. The poet seems to be enjoying the situation which is more mirth-giving than painful.

The third part describes the familiar domestic scene: the irritation of the mother-in-law over the ways of her daughter-in-law. It is also the eternal irritation of age over youth. The daughter-in-law loves fashions and shirks work, says her mother-in-law; she loves silver and uses harsh words against her (aged mother-in-law), which torment her. But she has a trump card; she tries to create repulsion in her son for his wife. And she induces him to let his wife alone, she will arrange a second marriage for him. The poem is a caustic comment, though described with the good-natured

humour of Ram Dhan, on our domestic life, where daughter-in-law is sometimes treated no better than the dumb-driven cattle and where the disobedient daughter-in-law has to live in an atmosphere of perpetual threat of a second wife of her husband. The colloquial expression, the quick pace of her speech, describes the angry state of the mother who is complaining to her son against the ill-doings of his wife. The briskness of the style indicates a woman who is running out of her breath, and the reference about her cough is conveyed in a masterly manner:

The fourth part shows Ram Dhan as a devotional poet. While reading these lines, one is reminded of Meera Bhai's famous devotional song :

"Oh, friend, I am love-mad, nobody understands my love-pain".

It is the love of the soul for the Supreme Being, of Radha for Krishana. The poem conjures up the picture of a young girl and her parents who are upset about her malady. Some superstitious persons think that she is possessed of a ghost-like spirit and, therefore, are going to offer some sacrifices of she-goat or black cock, or they intend to visit some religious place—a place of gods or a temple. But how should she tell her parents she is not possessed by any such thing? She is possessed by divine love, she is a captive of Lord Krishna. The reference throws back the reader to the stories of Lord Krishna and the young milk-maids who were mad with his love. The poem has another meaning in the worldly sense : the young girl is love-

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lorn but unfortunately her parents don't understand it. The silence which is expected of a young girl in our domestic life is also partly responsible for such a painful situation.¹

Ram Dhan was famous in the Akhnoor area and his poems were also famous but this one poem is sufficient to prove the genius of Ram Dhan as a poet. The grace and ease with which he described his subject, the mastery over his medium, the maturity of vision and intimacy with which he described the domestic scene, ranging from innocent love to experienced one, and the fine lyrical quality of his poetry—these are the qualities which have made Ram Dhan a truly great poet of Dogri.

1. For greater details see *Nihārīkā* Ed. by Ram Nath Shastri, a Cultural cademy Publication, 1959.

PART
II

CHAPTER III MODERN POETS

Thakur Raghunath Singh Samayal (1885—1963): Thakur Raghunath Singh was the resident of Samba and his father was a landlord. After completing his school education, Thakur Raghunath Singh became a teacher. He left the job and became a clerk in the Revenue Department and due to hard work, he became the Tehsildar.

In those days Tehsildar was the virtual ruler of a Tehsil. The positions of a landlord and the ruler of the Tehsil were combined in him; he loved power, and the system which made him powerful—feudalism. Thakur Raghunath Singh is highly individualistic and egoistic. Therefore, when after 1947, popular Government was formed, this came as a jolt to him and his ideas. He strongly resented these developments and turned to the rightist movement which was termed sectional and reactionary by the nationalists and the progressives.

Samayal Sahib was fond of learning. During his office-tenure at Gilgat, he salvaged manuscripts in Pali language and also prepared a small grammar of Shina. He was a man of set ideas and with a strong personality. In his poems his ideas and personality are to be seen. One does not always agree with him but one cannot deny the forceful style which is the mirror of a forceful personality. In his poetry there is seen toughness and

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biting satire. His egoism and aristocratic bent of mind sometimes interfere with his art, for he thinks of poetry as a means to express his feelings and personality. In other words, the subjective element is quite dominant in his creations.

This element of subjectivism is very strong in his personality, in his poetry and even in other spheres of his activity. He is essentially out-spoken and self-centred. The result has been that even though there was community of ideas and ideology with some, he could not mix freely with his kind in politics. It was probably his interest and resultant isolation in politics which opened up the springs of poetry in him. Seeing the young poets serving the cause of their motherland and their mother-tongue, Dogri, he could not remain uninfluenced, and decided to do something in this direction. He wrote poems in praise of Duggar and Dogras, although at times he censured them for their superstitions, idle customs, wasteful fashions and misleading ways of education and administration.

In Th. Raghunath Singh there is the zeal of the reformer. This brings him nearer to Pt. Hardatt Shastri; but whereas Pt. Hardatt mixed freely with people, influenced them and was influenced by them in his approach and outlook, Th. Raghunath Singh stands alone, at a higher pedestal. Whereas Pt. Hardatt's approach was more sympathetic, Th. Raghunath Singh's is full of censure and castigation. In other words, Pt. Hardatt was a reformer with a social approach, but Samyal is personal and individualistic in his approach to social problems, Hardatt's poetry is more progressive

and dynamic, Thakur Raghunath Singh's is more rigid and orthodox.

Th. Raghunath Singh has paid tributes to Dogras and Dogri. His style is vigorous and forceful :

'The Dogras are the embodiment of action and duty, they are soft as silk, but in the battle-field they can be hot like fire.' (See Arūnimā)

The language of the Dogras is sweet and adorable. Nation is like a treasure, a mine of diamonds. And in spite of these qualities. why are the Dogras lagging behind? Because they are orthodox, superstitious and are in the habit of swearing (page 2-Khō see Arūnimā by Tara Samailpuri). Along with these there are undesirable social customs which ignore the living and starve him, but which show respect for and feed the dead. This is clear from his *Inde Kōlā Churkō* (Shun these things). False prestige to observe social customs makes the matters worse. To honour his dead father, a son borrows money from a usurer at huge rates of interest, knowing well that he has not the means to repay it. And when he cannot, the usurer is there to get his pound of flesh (page 14, 16 Arūnimā).

'By accepting loans he tried to save his "nose" but people spat at him.

'He borrowed to save his nose, how can he pay off the debts'?

Munoo Shah (the usurer) has caught hold of Punoo Shah (the loanee), who borrowed money to celebrate

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the death anniversary of his father. Now Punoo Shah knows no scheme to save his skin. As if all this was not enough, fashions are acting like a last straw to break our back: fashions among women, co-education, drinking and degrading effect of cinema. How can the nation be saved from total degeneration? Only if the Dogras wake up to these dangers, and all the constituent units of Duggar—Mirpur, Nurpur Kangra—rise to the occasion. The poet can play a noble part in retaining the glory, beauty, bravery, cultural heritage of the Dogras. What is required is courage and determination and the right lead: Dogra Des Jagâi Jâyân O. "Awaken This Dogra Land, page 6 Arūnimâ).

In Prabhât (Dawn) though there is a pathetic comment on the poverty prevailing in a family or in the country, the night (actual and symbolic) is its last stage, and the morning of new hopes is also at hand. The poet should take heart for the night is about to fade (page 8 Arūnimâ). The stanza is a good description of the day-break, of the chirping birds and the hymns and prayer-songs in the temples. The animal and the bird-world is wide awake, human beings should also wake up. Night symbolises darkness and misery, morning symbolises rise of new day, of new hopes and new era; there is also in this stanza the nature-description.

Th. Raghunath Singh generally writes on subjects of topical interest. He feels fed up with the prevailing indifference towards art and literature in our society:

"Kavī rattan Galī vicch ruldā, be kadreñ de mahalle.

Raṅg shakal gunn parkhān kiyañ, akal nain jinde palle."

(In the locality of unenthusiasts about art and literature, the gems of poets are lying unclaimed and untended. How can they judge of beauty, merits and wisdom who have no share of intelligence?)

Sometimes, however, Raghunath Singh wants to talk of spiritual subjects. It is difficult to sail through this ocean-like world. It is the mind which sinks the boat, and it alone takes one to the shore (Krishna Léélā, page 22 of Arūnimā.)

Raghunath Singh has written also about Dogri language and paid a handsome tribute to it (pages, 20,22), on wordly, commonsense topics like Māli (20). The style of a preacher is evident in Mahmāñ (page 18). Samayal's another contribution to literature is his verse translation of Gêêtā in Dogri. This translation is from a verse translation in Hindi, because Raghunath Singh Samayal does not know Sanskrit. There are some linguistic defects as pointed out by Dr. Sidheshwar Verma. (Kashmir Affairs, Ed. by Balraj Puri).

Though the language in which he has translated the Geeta is simple, no doubt,—it has a conversational touch—but it does not do justice to the great theme and the reflective quality for which the Geeta is famous. The conversational style, in this case, makes it look trivial and even sluggish at times. It is somehow inadequate to the task. The translation lacks high seriousness which may be due to the projection of the translator's

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personailty. Many words are from Hindi and they are used in an awkward fashion. But the attempt is not to be discouraged. It has opened up new possibilities of developing Dogri literature, of enriching it by adopting and translating from other lanugages. It is also useful in adding to the vocabulary of Dogri. Th. Raghunath's language is the spoken one, his style is forceful. He has the knack to use Dogri idiom in its proper context. One, however, does not find the melody which one finds in the poetry of Shambu Nath or Almast, nor do his poems deal with people's problems as those of Dinoo Bhai Pant and Tara Samailpuri do. The elements of reflective poetry are absent from his poetry. He is least connected with the new literary trends in Dogri although he is influenced at times by them. And yet by the force of his poetic language, the idiomatic use of Dogri, the translation of Geeta, he has carved a place for himself in Dogri poetry.

He died in 1963 after a brief illness.

Pt. Hardutt Shastri (1890-1956). That Dogri poetry has a tradition of its own can be proved from the poems of Dattu (Raja Ranjit Dev's rule), Pt. Ganga Ram (who lived during the reign of Maharaja Ranbir Singh), and those of L. Ramdhan (whose poetry belongs to the reign of Maharaja Pratap Singh). But the available material is so scanty that we cannot form a very distinct idea about that tradition. It seems hardly believable that Dattu, Pt. Ganga Ram and L. Ramdhan wrote only those poems which are at present available to us; on the other hand, their maturity, the sweetness of their language, the full control and mastery of their style indicate that they

must have written more poems. More research is needed to find out if there are more manuscripts which have not yet been traced out or if everything is lost in the abyss of oblivion.

Pt. Hardutt Ji Shastri is the first poet of modern consciousness in Dogri in whose writings the social, economic and religious problems found expression. Dogri literature found its definite development in the poetry of Hardutt.

Pt. Hardutt was born at Palaura, a village about three miles from Jammu. From the age of five, he was staying with his uncle, Pt. Sant Ram Vedpathi, and acquired a knowledge of Sanskrit. He became a Sanskrit teacher in the Education Department of Jammu and Kashmir Government. At the time of retirement, Pt. Ji had become an important part of the social life of Jammu province. In connection with his service, Pt. Ji had to go to different parts of Jammu. He came to meet and mix with the people of those regions. He had a feeling heart and an observant eye. His poetic genius blossomed in the climate of social and economic disparity, the evils which were sapping the social order and stability. The love of the land and its people, and the indignation which he felt at the sad state of affairs inspired his poet's heart to writing poetry in Dogri.

Pt. Hardutt was better known as a Kathâ Vâchak to the people of Jammu. Being religious-minded, these people used to listen to Pt. Ji with a deep sense of curiosity and admiration. Hardutt Ji

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had a peculiar charm as a narrator of religious tales; he had the capacity to touch the chords of human sympathy and to move them to wrath at their deplorable plight as well as to make them laugh at the ridiculous nature of things. This laughter was directed against themselves, and only when they pondered over it did they realise the real purpose of Pt. Ji's poetry. The audience consisted of Dogri-speaking and Dogri-understanding men and women, and his compositions, written in simple and direct style, had an obvious effect upon them.

Pandit Ji was imbued with a deep sense of patriotism; he was capable of understanding the sad plight of his land and possessed a poet's heart. To crown this all, he had as audience those who were always anxious to listen to him. In his writings, therefore, one finds an attempt to please and instruct; rather to instruct by pleasing. His style is essentially that of a pedagogue; his art was not for art's sake; it was a vehicle to express the moral fervour, the spiritual values and the patriotic zeal. The best way was to appeal to the people's sentiments, to make them laugh sometimes, but in that very laughter were the undercurrents of irony and satire, a desire to improve the existing conditions. The listeners, on reflection, understood his real aim. The satire was against no other than themselves; the conditions described were the conditions of their homes and hearths. It is in this socio-domestic field that we find the pre-eminence of Hardutt's poetry. His poetry lacks the elegance and the flights of poetic fancy, but it definitely possesses the human element—the common affairs of

mankind, sometimes trivial and ordinary, sometimes ascending to and assuming big and national proportions.

Majority of his poems have a clear theme. Each poem can be divided into three parts: the first part deals with the greatness of the past age, its glorification; the second part refers to the present age which strangely contrasts with the glorious past. People living in the present age, according to him, are caught in the mire of social evils, narrow-mindedness and communalism. All this is disgraceful. But Hardutt is not an idealist who lives and feeds on hollow slogans, nor is he a cynical objector of things. If we had glorious traditions, there is no reason why, in spite of our undesirable state of affairs, we cannot revive and retain them. What is required is clarity of vision and determination. This is the note on which his poems end. In this broad framework, Hardutt includes an indictment of our social order where hypocrisy, sham, superstition, fanaticism and oppression of the poor, the untouchables and the widows prevail. The mood of the poems changes according to the mood of the listeners. Sometimes there is a subtle irony, sometimes there is mild satire, at others, there is an open condemnation—all described in a robust and forceful style; the language is simple and colloquial, and the effect on the listeners is all too visible.

Hardutt's sense of patriotism is social, not political. Though the country forms the main theme of his poems, their treatment is from the angle of a social reformer and not from that of a political economist or a philosopher. This is clear from his poems "Merâ Des" (My country), and Dōgrâ Des. What is remarkable about Hardutt and his poetry is not the great variety of subjects and their treatment; but consistency of theme

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and its treatment are the high-lights of Hardutt's poetry. Because Hardutt was a reformer-poet, and like the Arya Samajists who tried to reform Hinduism, he tried to reform the Sanatnists Hindus, and touched on all those topics which could have any public utility. When he finds abject misery prevailing in the country, when social evils are rampant, when justice is denied to the deserving, it is a shame to call ourselves great or the representatives of a great nation. The country has lost its greatness on account of these very evils, and unless they are eradicated, there is no possibility that we shall occupy a deserving place in the comity of nations. On the other hand, we shall sink lower in the abyss of misery and degradation.

Hardutt's poems have some topical allusions, some local references, and their understanding helps the reader in their proper appreciation and enjoyment. Hardutt was a progressive poet, but his progressivism was not that of a politician or a revolutionary. His approach to social and political problems was pragmatic. It is no use talking of social revolutions, practical steps to remove the prevalent evils will go a long way in rehabilitating our social and economic position. And he tries to achieve these ends in his poems sometimes by satire, sometimes by appeal and exhortation, and sometimes by outright indignation and indictment. *Merâ Des*, *Dōgrâ Des*, *Fashion*, *Bekârî* (Unemployment), *Dâltî dâ Dhandâ* (Evils of Litigation), are full of moral indignation. As said earlier, Pandit Ji's approach was pragmatic and constructive. He criticises to correct, to improve. He is touched to the quick on seeing fashions taking the better of commonsense. In

imitating (foreign) fashions, all the traditions of the past, the glories of Bhīm and Arjūn, are forgotten, with the result that our domestic life is becoming miserable.

In Bekārī he takes up the burning problem of unemployment. If instead of importing raw materials and commodities, local industries are started, it will go a long way in removing unemployment from the land, a practical suggestion which was put into operation by Mahatma Gandhi. In Kalī Jūge dī Mahimā, we find the moraliser enraged at the evil state of affairs. Running through all his poems is a nostalgia for the past. The

present is ugly and hateful and the only way to recapture the past is to build a new future, based on the old values of life, but not on superstition, fanaticism or social inequality. These things are mainly responsible for sapping the energy of the country. This is clear from the other poem 'Fashion' (Page 62, Nihārikā). The style of the narrator—narrator's personality is inherent in the style—is forceful. Good and religious deeds are forsaken, resulting in the present mess. Therefore, if Lord manifests himself again on this earth, things will change for the better. In this poem as also in 'Kali Jūge dī Mahimā' we find the religious aspect of Hardutts personality. Religious fervour, devotee's preference for spiritual values and abhorrence of materialism, are visible. The spirit of the Geeta lies in abjuring material values and in possessing clean conscience and clear heart.

Hardutt is the first modern in Dogri literature. He understood the importance of mother-tongue, and in his poem 'Mātrī Bhāshā', he proves it through allusions to the 'rishis' and sages of the past who

distinguished the right from the wrong and shunned all evils and never ignored their mother-tongue. The seeds of national fermentation, which brought home to the people the significance of their mother-tongue, are inherent in this poem.

His 'Laṅkā Terī Nainyūṇ Bachni' is a strong indictment of autocracy, of bureaucratic regime. The poem moves back to the Ramayana days and draws analogies between the last days of Raja Ravan and the autocratic rulers of the present day. The imagery of wealth and fire vividly brings before the reader the impending fate of the modern despots, who, like Ravan, listen to no reason and see no sense, and are, therefore, bound to meet the fate of Ravan. How true and prophetic his words have proved to be in the national context !

His 'Dāltī dā Dhaṇḍā' is a graphic description of the evils of the system of litigation. The suit for land ultimately becomes the cause of ruin. From the beginning, we can see that Hardutt is ranged against litigation. He portrays different stages in the process of litigation; how litigants have to sell and mortgage their property in their vain hope of winning the suit, resulting in bankruptcy; how the peons and munshis working in the courts want palm oil for their services and the lawyers their wages. The poor litigants want now to be saved from their saviours, and wish these legal proceedings to be over. The style is light-hearted and humorous, it is satirical and although its satire is mild, it makes the reader think. The munshi of the pleader is sucking him like a leech; he extorts money from the litigant in one form or another. This

leads to the decision that instead of wasting money on litigation, it is better to donate it to the poor and the needy. The purpose is clear enough, although the style has become shaky here.

In 'Khajjal Khawâri', the same reformer is active. Hardutt decries the evils of contemporary society: blind faith and superstitions, marriage of males in old age when young girls have to suffer if once they become widows. The poem is rich in local colour and topical references. Hōōn Namâ Jamânâ Jī (People call this new age!) is a light-hearted satire on our domestic life. The satire is effective for it clearly describes the economic difficulties and the shams of our domestic life. The poet is hurt and, therefore, he appeals to his listeners to leave this sham. Disease cannot be eradicated by concealing it by silent suffering. We must change for the better, for it is of no use concealing the malady and then hoping against one's judgment that the evil will be cured. Hardutt's last poem in Dogri 'Phūt Mere dese de kâlâ di Nishânī ai' (disunity is the sign of death of this country). The poem is full of topical interest. It condemns the communal riots of 1947, the British rule responsible for all our differences and troubles leading to the partition of the country and those people who have become tools in the hands of the foreigners. People should desist from such acts as have brought bad name to the country. The style is forceful, although there is no high literary quality. The poem was meant to shake the people off their indifference, and it succeeds to a great extent in so doing.

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Patriotism dominates Hardutt's ideas, and his writings are a clear proof of that. But he felt he had to do his duty by his motherland and his mother-tongue, Duggar and Dogri. All the evils which he had decried prevailed in this land and they must be eradicated. People in other areas were widely awake; if the Dogras did not wake up, they will lag behind and time will not wait for them nor will the future generations excuse them. Already this indifference has resulted in the deterioration of the land in economic field, it is faced with adverse times:

Lakheñ thōuwāñ bani gayâ kakh lōkō

All others are progressing, but why have the Dogras shut their eyes to all this?

Aakkhīñ mittī laiīyāñ pakk lōkō

Under such circumstances what will become of his land?

Ke âkhāñ mere desâ terâ ke hâl hōg

It is highly imperative, therefore, to wake up yourself and make others wake, too:

Sajjno apnâ âap jagâō
Āapōō jagō desâ gī jagâō

Such was the poet Hardutt. It is an irony, however, that the man who exhorted the people to rise from their slumber and overcome their economic destitution, had to leave his family and land in search of his living in old age. He died in Bombay in 1956.

Pt. Hardutt will occupy a special place in the history of Dogri literature. Not that he enjoyed a high literary excellence. Nor was he the master of sweet harmonies or romantic flights. And yet these

deficiencies cannot detract from his real merits; the consistency of his subject and its treatment. He wrote and popularised Dogri poetry at a time when there were no traditions of modern Dogri literature. He wrote in a metre which belongs to Hindi and is based on the popular tunes of Panjabi songs, and he was able to attract the attention of his listeners. The tradition set by Hardutt is carried on in the poetry of Dinoo Bhai Pant, Ram Nath Shastri, Deep, Madhukar and others. And this, in itself, is an ample tribute to the genius of Hardutt as a poet.

Swami Brahmanand (1891-1962). In the modern age, the Dogri poets are not indifferent to moral or spiritual values. The poetry of Pt. Hardutt Shastri, Shri Shambu Nath, Shri Ramnath Shastri and Shri Ram Lal Sharma is full of moral tones but the supreme example of the manifestation of spiritual values in Dogri poetry is that of Swami Brahmanand.

Shri Swami Ji was born at Akhnoor in Jammu Province in the year 1891. His real name was Shri Sansar Singh. He had his schooling in his birth-town, Akhnoor. He had got an appetite for learning from his early age. After completing his studies at Akhnoor, Shri Sawami Ji came to Jammu and here he got a real atmosphere and studied the Persian and English literatures, about the Vedas and Sufism.

In the beginning he joined as a clerk in Shri Ranbir Government Press and after three years, he was transferred to the Reception Department of the Jammu and Kashmir Government but, due to the death of his wife, he left this service after some years.

Before becoming a Sanyasi, he had his education in Braam-Sutra, Shankar Bhashya and Upnishadas from the great scholar of Sanskrit, Shri Nika Ram Ji Shastri of Jammu. He started writing in Dogri in the year 1955, and till the time he expired in 1962, he had written six books.

Swami Ji is a believer of Vedant Darshan; like all Vedantis he feels that the root cause of misery in this world is our deep involvement into the worldly affairs; because we are so greatly attached to worldly gains and losses, real happiness, which lies in our harmonious state of mind, eludes us. All the outer manifestations are unreal and deceptive; they are false (mithya) and illusory (Maya). And the best way to attain to the peace of the soul is to overpower the desires and temptations of the body and the mind. A Vedanti recognises the soul and the Supreme Soul, and in each one of us there is the same manifestation of the Supreme Soul.

All this is abstract and recondite philosophy, but the great success of Swami Brahmanand lies in his expressing it in a simple, easy-to-understand and direct fashion. With the help of figures of speech, he elucidates his point; those who are infatuated by the outward show of things can never be happy:

'Dikhne Sūnne andar āvey. so sab jhōōtha
mithyā āi.

Mrig trishna dā jal jō pēndā, rajdā nain kōi
dikhyā āi'

What's required is our will to master our straying mind:

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'Saṁsârâ ch Kōi nain vāirī, bhalyen nazar
dâruâi āi,

Apne gāi is mane kâṇne, athae pāir laṛâi āi.

We are unhappy because this world is too much with us, for getting and spending we lay waste our spiritual powers. The great dilemma facing mankind is the greed and avarice on this earth and a fear of the unseen (of the next world). Those who cannot overcome their greed but seem to devote to the spiritual pursuits are like those persons who are sailing in two boats; they suffer because in trying to hold fast to the illusory joys and blessings of this material world, they lose the joys and happiness which one can attain by sticking to the spiritual realities of this universe.

Therefore, like the great sages of the Vedantic sect, Swami Ji lays emphasis upon controlling the vagarant mind, without which happiness will elude us as mercury eludes touch, or water eludes the pipe which has holes on all sides.

Five collections of Swami Ji's poetry have been published: 'Gūṅge dâ Gūr', 'Mânsarōvar' 'Gūpt Gaṅga,' 'Shrī Braham Saṅkīrtan' and 'Amrit Varshâ.'

Dogri poetry, which has been enriched by the deep spiritual content of Swami Ji's poems, rendered in the simple and effective style, would have been the poorer without them.

In 1962, he shed his worldly garments and departed for his heavenly abode.

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Mool Raj Mehta : Along with Hardutt, another poet who had become popular in Dogri is Mool Raj Mehta. Not much is known about him and his works, but his one poem 'Jēnâ Pahāren Dâ Jēnâ' has carved a place for him in the history of Dogri poetry.

The poem is full of nostalgic memories of the life in the hills and is one among the many songs—most of them folk-songs—which contrast the life in the hills with the life in the plains and the cities. The poem is remarkable for its simplicity, lyrical quality, and is written on the tune of Pahari songs, with the result that one often treats it as a folk-song. It comments upon the unsophisticated nature of the inhabitants of the hills, upon their bracing climate, the fresh water-springs, and the glowing herbs which shine on dark nights. The poet also disparages the living of the cities and their people who are bright of body but black of mind. They are engrossed in money-making. What do they know of others' pains and misery? The poor Pahari people go to the cities in order to make a better living, but only they know what they have to face there.

The language of the poem is the spoken language, and the simple descriptions, sung in the Pahari tune, add to the poem's beauty.

It also throws some light on the ways of living of the Paharis and their occupations, of making blankets and Lōèès. Mool Raj seems to be from the plains who has been impressed by the simple Pahari folks. Almast is another poet who has been fascinated

by the beauty of the hills about which Mool Raj Mehta has sung so eloquently. It is a pity that no other poem of Mool Raj is traceable, although there is reason to believe that he must have written more poems than one.

Jagan Nath Kalra 'Charlie.' Jagan Nath Kalra was born in 1894 at Kotli Charkan, not very far from Jammu. He read up to the middle standard and secured a job with late Maharaja Pratap Singh as his personal entertainer. After Pratap Singh's death, he joined the Revenue Department. Kalra used to play comic roles on the stage and everybody called him 'Charlie' on this account.

In 1943, his wife died, and the unexpected shock opened the flood-gates of emotions, and he wrote his first poem :

"Some one dies today, some tomorrow and the others have to die on the following days."¹

After this he wrote many poems dealing with a variety of subjects. Jagan Nath is essentially a poet of humorous verses, but his humour is not subtle. If there is a satire, it does not have the thrust of a sharp rapier; it has the bluntness of a bludgeon stroke. Mr. Kalra's aim of writing poetry is to be happy and to make others so. He is more popular when he recites his poems in a poetic symposium, for then the gestures, voice and grotesque similes, which may not appeal to one's intellect, appeal nevertheless to the lighter instincts of his audiences.

¹ See Jago Duggar, a Dogri Sanstha publication.

Jagan Nath Kalra does not possess the finer qualities of language or feelings, but he definitely possesses a robust humour. Sometimes, quite unexpectedly, one comes across mild irony and pathos in his poems which ordinarily are full of farcical element.

One can see in his poems the influence of Late Pt. Hardutt Shastri : the social satire, with an appeal to God to help dawn better sense on mankind or for bringing about a drastic change in the social and living conditions of our country, owes not to a small degree to the influence of Hardutt on him. There are at times didactic portions in his poetry, but they seem to have been tagged in the end without forming an integral part of the poems. *Hind Dī Pūkār* (Call of India), *Kharā hā mein grān* (I was better off in the village), and *Gharibeñ Dī Dayālī* (Poor's Dewali) are some of his good poems. *Hind Dī Pūkār* forms the subject of patriotism; *Kharā hā mein grān* is a nostalgic reproduction of village memories, and a satire on the ways of city life. *Gharibeñ di Dayālī* tells the helplessness of a poor man who cannot afford to, and yet has to, celebrate Dewali; who can't afford two square meals a day but. to keep up appearance, has to buy expensive sweetmeats. Social customs don't allow a poor man to escape the expenditure on account of Dewali. Former ages were good; now only gambling and other social evils prevail. May Lord Krishan revive the sanctity of such festivals and guide mankind to better ways of life¹.

1. See Jago[^]-Duggar, a Dogri Sanstha publication.

Jagan Nath Kalra is not a great poet, but at a juncture when there were a few votaries of Dogri, he was one of those who tried to fill the duller moments of life with light-hearted mirth and farce.

Kishen Samailpuri (1900...) Kishen Samailpuri started his career with Urdu poetry and won acclaim by his literary creations. He was a close student of Zauq, Dagh, Ghalib and Josh Malihabadi, but when the movement for mother-tongue and regional languages gathered momentum, he turned to Dogri, so that by writing poetry in this language he could repay his debt to his land and serve his fellow countrymen. Kishen was born in 1900 in Samailpur, a village of Samba Tehsil. His father, Pt. Sunder Dass, was a religious person. From early life Kishen loved solitude and was of a serious bent of mind. When his mother died, he was only six and the shock of her death made him more brooding. He could not read beyond the middle standard, although he was fond of drama, music and poetry. His love for his mother found its expression in poetry, in his praise of Duggar, which is like a second mother :

“Firdâus se hāī baḥkar yeh merâ vatan Duggar

(Even better than heaven is my Duggar.) This was in Urdu. This was a glaring example of his deep devotion towards his land. Literary people admired him, but of what use was this to the bulk of the Dogras who could not read nor write Urdu, although the praise was meant for them? So, when the tide turned, Kishen Samailpuri assumed a new responsibility.

The tribal raids from Pakistan proved a blessing in disguise for the literary and cultural movement of Duggar. Poets had to act as liberators and leaders, and they had to awaken the Dogra masses from their slumber by their appeal in Dogri. They must be conscious of their rich heritage, of the beauty of their country. It was in this situation that the poetry of patriotism was born in Dogri. Duggar was not only as beautiful as heaven (Dinoo Pant's *Sūrgā nayā des Dōgrā*); for Kishen Samailpuri it was even more beautiful :

Sūrgā di Gal naīñ lā, Aṛēā, Jas apne desā gā aṛēā.

(Why talk of heaven? Sing in praise of your own land.)

This was the culminating point in, patriotism in poetry and this was the echo of Kishen's earlier panegyric about Duggar in Urdu. Kishan's poem covers different aspects of Duggar, its history, geography, legends and myths. It is an excellent introduction in Dogri for outsiders and an eye-opener for Duggar's inhabitants. Nature has emptied all its treasures here; it has been the land of warriors, abode of saints and gods, and the living-place of beautiful but brave women; of bracing climate and river and forest-wealth.

And if, in spite of such beautiful provisions, if our country is not like heaven, it is because of the selfishness and exploitation of the many by the few. As such the social order needs must be changed which is responsible for this iniquity and injustice. With-

out economic and cultural freedom, our political freedom becomes a mockery:

'Aseñ eh din palti sūttne niñ'.

(We shall change these times)

His love for Duggar is expressed in other poems as well. Dōgrā Pāincchī is an eloquent expression of his love for Duggar. This poem is also, like Sūrg Des (Heavenly Land), a narration of historical, geographical and legendry details; it also sings in praise of Dogra women whose beauty puts the whiteness of moon to shame. In his Sayāsī Gêêt (political song) which is written on the tune of a Punjabi film song, he appeals to the Dogras to rise because the country is in distress; it has been beset with internal enemies—in the form of communalism, jealousy and other rivalries among its people—and the external aggression. The way to defend the country is to fight them out. Though the sentiments in the song are worth appreciating, this poetry lacks spontaneity and melody.

The bulk of Krishen Samailpuri's poems consists of geets and ghazals. Kishen started as an Urdu writer and he is well-conversant with the technique, style and mode of ghazal. He brought his experience and knowledge to use and wrote some good ghazals. He works in the Jammu Radio Station, and this fact helped him in popularizing his poetry and ghazals in Dogri. The subject of his ghazals is love and sensuous beauty (Shringar) which forms a major body of his Urdu ghazals as well. Technically his ghazals are successful and they have succeeded in evoking in

Dogri ghazal the mood of Urdu love-poetry. There is pleasantry, a light-hearted romance, self-pity, self-laughter, and praise of the beloved in his ghazals. Sometimes they are amusingly witty : "Smilingly, I embraced her, but she said angrily, 'Do you think I am a flower-twig to be entwined round? Ghazal Nos I and 2 (page 49, *Arūnimā* by Tara Samailpuri) are examples of the light-hearted wit of the poet. The great quality of Kishen in some of his ghazals is to make the readers laugh at his cost; therein lies the comedy of situation and humour. The metre is almost that of Urdu ghazals.

But a large section of his poetry consists of songs dealing with love and union, love and separation. Sometimes nature-description is also included. The number of songs, according to Kishen, was small in Dogri; he tried to make up for that lack. Sometimes he combines the love of the land with the beauty of women. His contention is that by adopting the folk-songs or taking a line or two from them and writing his own song, he has saved them from oblivion; at the same time he has added to their beauty. This is a controversial point, for it is not always a change for the better. Sometimes the mood of the original song is not fully captured and the addition lacks spontaneity and atmosphere. The Geet on Page 43 of *Arūnimā* is a case in point. It is a misrepresentation of the original song and its spirit, for the young bride wants to know something about her parents back home whereas in Kishen's song, there are hints that she is unable to know why she feels the way she does on seeing him (Jogi). She does not feel like doing any work and she feels tired after doing small work.

One thing more. Folk-songs, because they were not written with any conscious aim of winning personal glory or name, are not self-conscious; they might have been written by individual or collective effort, but they represent the mood and efforts of the writers to create a proper atmosphere. But in some of Kishen Samailpuri's songs, there is lack of that warmth, that mood and there is repetition of the same idea in different verses. This makes them unappealing at times in so far as their literary merit is concerned (see page 41, *Arūnimā*). Geet No. 2 (on page 39 *Arūnimā*) lacks sweetness which is the speciality of folk-songs. Moreover, the mention of the "Butt" atonce gives the impression of utter nonseriousness, whereas the earlier lines are advancing serious arguments about the double-faced policy of the world. In Geet No. I (page 39, *Pardesan Kōḍṇj*) the last couplet is forced and lacking in artistry, and the last line in which he requests the Koonj bird to take him with her as her servant borders on the ludicrous. The whole song is deficient in poetic spirit.

Kishen Samailpuri has also attempted to write *Savāiyā*, *Dōhe*, *Kavitt* in the style of Hindi poetry and *Thumri* and other raags in *Dogri*. Where the technical skill is concerned, Kishen possesses that and his experiments in writing or adopting 'Dohe' 'Kavitt', *Savāiyā* and *Kuṇḍaliyān* from Hindi into *Dogri* have been sufficiently successful. But so far as his effort to write *thumri* and other raags in *Dogri* are concerned, one cannot be too sure. Raags have their own fixed matras in a classical fashion and they have their own background and style. They are an evoca-

tion of a particular mood and atmosphere. Whereas it is possible to write them in the fixed matras in Dogri, Samailpuri has not been able to evoke that particular mood and musical quality in them. One needs to be well-versed in music, and though Samailpuri understands music, he needs greater technical and academic mastery over it. But who can deny that the effort has been a laudable one?

Krishen Samailpuri's contribution to Dogri is praise-worthy. Of late, he has been isolated from the main literary movement and is given to writing of more love-lyrics and ghazals. Kishen has also augmented the number of Dogri songs. Though the higher qualities of the narrative, dramatic and reflective poetry are missing in Kishen's works, he has done a good service by doing new experiments in Dogri literature by writing ghazals, kavitt, Savaiyas Kundaliyan etc. At the same time his descriptions of Duggar, though they sometimes contain hyperboles, are aglow with the sentiments of patriotism.

Parmanand Almast (1901). Almast's name suggests a man who is carefree, self-centred and free from the daily humdrum of life, and whose poetry is also bearing the mark of these qualities. Having spent a number of years in the beautiful region of Dudu-Basant-Garh, he has drunk deep into their beauty (Tehsil Ramnagar), and many of his poems are an expression of the nostalgic memories of that area. It won't be wrong to say that Almast came to Dogri poetry with his songs in praise of the hilly regions, their scenic beauty, the simplicity of their people and this aspect is predominant in all his

poetry. It is in this area that he realised that Duggar is beautiful, its climate is bracing and one feels mentally satisfied there. The murmur of springs and rivulets, the chirping of birds, blossoming of flowers and fruit and the change of seasons speak of a life of freshness and beauty and all these things are mirrored in Almast's poetry. To them he dressed in the tunes and metres of the pahari geets, with the result that some times one gets the impression as if his poetry is written on the basis of folk-songs. It seems that while writing about the hills, he had completely donned the mantle of a hillman, and his authentic descriptions of the hilly scenery and atmosphere are not a little due to this fact.

Almast was the only son of his parents and he received their affection in a great measure. But when he was ten, his father passed away. His mother was mentally deficient and he started living with his grandfather. He passed his middle class examination, and soon he had to seek job as a 'compounder' after the death of his grand-father.

Almast started writing poetry in 1931, and his first poem in Dogri was written to celebrate the birth of Yuvraj Karan Singh, the first Sadr-i-Riaysat of Kashmir state. At that time he found his admirers at Kathua where he was posted. In Almast the element of music is strong and his poems have a song-like quality which looks more enchanting when he recites them in Pahari tunes.

In Almast's poetry one finds how much his stay at Dudu-Basant Garh has moulded his thought and technique. The themes dealing with the descriptions of

hilly areas, their people, customs and manners are dealt with a freshness and charm of the phari music and the gay abandon of these regions. At times, one gets a temptation to consider his subject and style synonymous with the hilly areas and, it is in this respect that Almast and his songs are famous in Dudu-Basant Garh. If a folk-song runs down life in the hills, Almast comes out boldly in its defence. "The living in the hills is nice, oh friend,

Cool breeze and cool shades—you forget all the worries of life."

Lest one should think Almast's poetry is confined only to subjects pertaining to hilly areas, his "Surag Nāin Jān Hōōndā Pittal khaykāye de" may be referred to. Almast has become free like the winds and he refuses to be bound in the narrow, set-conventions. Nature is free and nature is not artificial. Therefore, why should man be? Joy and sweetness lie in honesty and naturalness and he cannot appreciate those who create a web of fine colours to trap innocent humanity. True religion lies in humanity, in loving every human being. This alone brings peace of mind and will lead to salvation. He, as such, condemns those who are misleading mankind by their hoax and frauds of religious rites and obligations. Can any one go to heaven by simply playing on some instruments or singing some religious songs, although their minds are polluted with the plans of hood-winking and deceiving the innocent? Sant Kabir, too, hated the sham and artificiality of life and he felt one could go to heaven only by one's good deeds and not by mere show and formality. 'If God can be attained to by worshipping stones, I shall worship the whole mountain', he said. Then why not expose this sham so that the millions are saved

from their being exploited by the selfish hordes of priests and padres? The poem is a severe indictment of priests and their artificial ways of life. The tone is colloquial and biting. Its rhythm creates the same effect as the tinkling of bronze-material creates—a jarring effect upon those who want to deceive mankind by such devices. And Almast makes a common-sense approach. The priests and padres have been the cause of leading mankind astray, by sowing the seeds of disharmony and disruption and by ignoring humanity and worshipping gold and silver; and by creating hatred of each other in people's mind, they have committed sacrilege. How can mankind escape the evil consequences of such ways of these priests? Of course, by following the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi: of love, Hindu-Muslim unity. The poem is also a criticism of the communalists.

This one poem brought Almast to the forefront. The forces of progress had found a new voice in Almast's poetry. Almast could not be isolated from the nationalist movement and patriotism in Dogri poetry. During 1947-50, there was a uniformity of conception and approach to local problems and every Dogri poet sang in praise of the glorious past of Duggar. *Dêsâ de sîpâhiyâ gi* (To country's soldier) is an exhortation to the soldiers of the land, to live and fight for their country's integrity. This fight is not only against foreign aggression but against internal disruption, against communalists—'Firku'. Safety lies in treading the path of Hindu-Muslim unity as shown by Bapu Gandhi. The poem has force and has references to the then prevailing conditions.

Dogri poetry revolved in its early period round patriotism—love of the land and its people. To talk of

'sensuous beauty (Shringâr) was considered a taboo; and because the poems were recited before an audience of Dogras, who are by nature conservative, there was no scope for Shringaric poetry being written in Dogri. However Almast and Kishen Samailpuri made departures. While singing in praise of the land, the beauty of its women was also praised. Kishen Samailpuri used the medium of Ghazal which has been employed in Urdu to describe feelings of love and sensuous beauty. The introduction of Shringâr in this way did not seem so offending. Almast composed his love poetry, as also most of his other poems, on the tunes and in the metre of folk-songs; and when people listened to such poetry, unconsciously they were reminded of the folk-songs of Duggar. Now Shringar poetry is of two kinds—the poetry of union and the poetry of separation. In Almast, the latter aspect is more pronounced. *Pahârên da Basnâ*, *Sâvan Aâiyâ*, *Kâgad chitrî Kalmân trūtiyân*, etc., describe the feelings of separation, which have a genuine degree of pain and pathos and which are made all the more touching by their lyrical quality.

Dogri poetry was without the songs of different seasons, although Sanskrit and Braj Bhasha abound with such descriptions. Almast's own poetry is the result of his keen personal observation: 'yellow fields have grown green, and the green have become darker' ("*Sâvan*", page 62, *Arūnimâ* by Tara Samailpuri). Its first two lines are also full of word and sound pictures. It won't be an exaggeration to name melody as one of the chief qualities of Almast.

Almast is a parctical person, and he knows that imagination is an important ingredient of poetry, but it

is not its only ingredient. One cannot live always divorced from deeper problems of life and the ethical issues facing mankind. What is life? what is wealth? All luxuries are transitory. Life is short-lived, and one does not carry anything with oneself after death. Then why not do good things and renounce selfishness, oppression and exploitation of others?

'Life is short-lived, everyone is to die,

Wealth and riches will not go with you; they will be left behind (after death).'¹

The poem, instead of degenerating into a mood of frustration, becomes a philosophic statement. The axioms and sayings of commonsense are liberally used to reinforce his arguments and substantiate the truth of his stand.

Almast has retired from the Government service. He was always queer and outspoken, but now he has become more so, for he has no obligation towards the official discipline. His *Sau din Jhōōthe de* (liar hath his day!) is a poem which is unsparing in its theme and treatment of the rulers and circumstances created by them. At the same time, it is a general statement based on the truth of proverbs. Every line starts with a proverb and the poem has a universal as well as a limited appeal. The condemnation is the severest and more direct and ruthless than in his earlier *Swarg Nāin jān Hūndā Pittal Khaṛkāye de*. In *Saū din Jhōōthe de*, the approach is commonsense and Almast talks like a 'wise' person.

1. ^A *Arūnima*, page 68.

The poem has a stinging tone and the mood of the poet is bitter. It is against this bitterness that Almast has to guard himself, for it will distort his vision and deprive him of that objectivity which he exhibited in his *Swarg Nāin Jān Hūndā*. 'Sau din' has a tone of invective which may win him temporary admirers but which lacks artistic detachment. It is also deficient in melodic charm.

Almast is a people's poet. He deals with their problems but he also is intensely individualistic and his treatment of the themes is individualistic. Almast has a keen eye, melody, close familiarity with Dogri folk-songs and their metre. However, he lacks sometimes the fine rhythmic measures; and his rhymes are forced and expressions trite on some occasions. Moreover, Almast has not a set philosophy of life. At times his vision is coloured by certain personal or temporary considerations; at times, he does not seem to be believing seriously in the things which he writes and recites.

But these deficiencies cannot detract one from his merits, and he occupies a special place in Dogri literature.

Pt. Shambu Nath (1962 Vikrami, 1905 A.D. ...). While carrying on the poetic traditions of his cousin, late Pt. Hardatt Shastri, Pt. Shambu Nath created a stir in the world of Dogri by reciting his first poem *Vidwā* (Widow) before an enthusiastic audience about a decade ago. He surprised his listeners by the witchery of his music, the artistry and skill which he had brought to use in this poem. It is the story of a widow who performs Sati when her husband is dead,—the theme

is reactionary and there is no need to glamorize it. But who could have realized that this poem would give to Dogri its best narrative poet who would exploit to the fullest the resources of the language to produce a verbal melody and create sound and word-pictures of the finest quality?

Born at Plaura, a village some four miles from Jammu, Pt Shambu Nath passed his matriculation from S. R. High School, Jammu and read upto F.A. in the Prince of Wales (now Gandhi Memorial Science) College, Jammu. From his early days Shambu Nath is a man of sober thinking and sober habits. He looks at things in a perceptive way and not in a superficial manner. This has engendered in him sympathy for this creation, for different modes and objects of life. Coupled with the imaginative quality, his sympathy and observation made him a poet in the real sense. There is high seriousness in his nature; triviality is absent from his character and so also from his poetry. His keen observation enables him to look beneath surface. But he is too compassionate to be a satirist. When he feels things are too much for him or exploitation and poverty are still not wiped out, he narrates them with feeling but never with acrimony. Even bitterness is allayed by the music of his language.

The element of music is the one characteristic which distinguishes Pt. Shambu Nath from the rest of the Dogri poets. One of its reasons is that he makes use of Hindi Chhand (metre) in his poetry. Secondly, the graceful ease of his language and artistic temperament also add to his poetry's sweetness. The alliteration and assonance, word and sound-pictures, imagery—which is

an integral part of his poetic conception and its execution — these are some of the qualities of his poetry. And Vidhwā, Phōōlān dā kūr̥tā (Phoolan's shirt), Mūn (Mind), Chetā (Memory), and Basaṇt (Spring) are some of the poems in which this musical quality is evident.

Sometimes there is a mild satire in his poems but their number is not large. 'Clerk' is one such poem, but it is not the clerk who is satirised; it is rather the set-up which is responsible for making the clerk what he is. Satire can be personal but the main aim of satire is to correct. If Shambu Nath's aim is to correct—as it is—the aim is not explicit; it is implicit in his poems, This is artistically desirable, but in many cases, it is a limitation in Shambu Nath that his social outlook is not clear. It shows the lack of vision. He can make you feel dissatisfied with the existing conditions but he does not suggest their remedies. In other words, he belongs to the old school of art for art's sake, But this also is not the whole truth. For he deals with life and uses his art as an expression of life, though his upbringing in an orthodox family, his training, his employment in the private department of Late Maharaja Hari Singh and his firm faith in God and theory of Karma incapacitate him for something more bold and imaginative. He lacks the historical and social perspective and does not properly understand the political forces which are at work. Therefore, he feels it his duty only to point out at the discrepancy between the actual things and the loud statements made by political leaders. And if he deals with political contradictions in a clearer way, as he does in Bāhādreñ di Zamādārī (Responsibility of the brave) or, Jūg Badloñdā Ja kardā (Times are changing) or Basaṇt, it is because his

mother-land is involved and his patriotism fills him with instinctive feelings which enable him to see through things even when his reason or worldly understanding fails. This lack of social vision sometimes makes his poems—although technically first rate—like Vidhwâ, Phoolân dâ kurtân, 'Clerk' inadequate and unsatisfying on account of their basic outlook which is limited in so far as their social implications are concerned.

To say this is not to mean that Shambu Nath is not a great poet. Shambu Nath writes whatever he sees and experiences. The result is that there is authenticity in his descriptions. Phoolân dâ Kurtâ is a narration of a sad tale of an adolescent girl who works hard to collect firewood and unfortunately tears her shirt. The depiction of Phoolan's state of mind—her hurt feelings, fear, helplessness at her miserable plight; the feelings of her mother who is annoyed for girls of Phoolan's age are getting married and she still is unmarried because they are poor; her father loving and kind even though poor and helpless—is masterly indeed. It is this sympathetic approach of Shambu Nath which prevents him from being satiric; at the same time his sympathy makes the situation real and convincing. Phoolan and her parents are no mere isolated individuals; they become types and symbols of young marriageable girls and poor miserable parents.

Shambu Nath is neither an escapist nor a mere romanticist, but sometimes one feels he is a fatalist, although fatalist is not the right word for it. Is it because he is religious and believes in the theory of predestination, or rather the theory of Karma? But he is not a pessimist because the Hindu theory of Karma

says we can change our lot by our actions, correct and noble actions. In his *Āuyū thōṛi tè kam baterā* (Time is short and art is long), he exhorts the people to work on and not to waste time, for time is fleeting. There is no escapism in this poem although one finds it to an extent in his *Vidhwā*.

Pt. Shambu Nath, however, is pre-eminently a narrative poet and narrative poetry is his main contribution to Dogri literature. He is a good actor and narration seems to have come to him as an art from his stage roles. To this he adds his command over language. This is why no other Dogri writer has written better narrative poetry in Dogri than Shambu Nath. *Vidhwā* and *Phōlāñ dā Kurtā* are hard to beat, but his greatest contribution in narrative poetry is the translation of the *Rāmâyāna*. He is totally imbued with the spirit and the moods of the *Ramayan*. He is and was, therefore, pre-eminently qualified to do the job. Dogri's is not a very rich literature, so far as its volume is concerned, it has the limitations of vocabulary, for it is still a developing language; but to translate such an epic as the *Rāmâyāna* in Dogri shows its dynamic nature and the vast potentialities it has. The *Ramayan* is an excellent piece of art, but the way Pt. Shambu Nath has translated its spirit is praise-worthy. He has not changed the mood and the spirit and has retained its melody and sweetness in Dogri as well. The language is simple and conversational, but Shambu Nath is a capable artist. He adopts the language to suit the expression of particular ideas, and when it comes to certain philosophic issues, the language is adjusted to those requirements. He is at his best

when the feelings of pity or pathos are to be described, or when some mirth, mingled with melancholy is to be expressed. The translation has fulfilled a long-felt desire of the Dogra masses. They now can read and understand it in Dogri which they could only hear in some Kathâ or see on the stage. At the same time, it has added to the volume of Dogri literature.

Pt. Shambu Nath belongs to a family whose contribution to literature has been great. Pt. Hardatt's contribution to Dogri, Punjabi and Hindi, Pt. Pitambar Shastri's contribution to Hindi and Sanskrit are well-known. Pt. Shambu Nath has lived up to their tradition. And the richness of expression and music of language which we find in Shambu Nath's poems is not to be seen in any other's poetry. He has fully captured the music of Dogri language. He has written a few short-stories as well and they are also embellished by his language but his field proper is poetry. In the minute observation of things and in giving every detail the touch of an artist and creating an imagery wherein language plays a decisive role, Shambu Nath can be compared to Tennyson, or Sumitra Nandon Pant in so far as they are known as master craftsmen. The descriptions in Vidhwâ of the young widow on the cloudy night at the Tawi river are its proof, if any proof were needed.

Sh. Ram Lal Sharma (1905 A.D....). Shri Sharma was born at Gurha Salathia in the month of October, 1905 in a respectable family of Khajuria Prohiths. After completing his studies, he joined the Forest Department of Jammu and Kashmir State and retired as a Range Officer at the age of 55. As a poet,

PART TWO

Shri Sharma started his career after his retirement and his first collection of Dogri poems entitled 'Kiran' was published in 1963. The said work contains some fifty poems and depicts the various aspects of life and Nature.

Shri Sharma is a well-travelled man and knows well the Duggar and its people, their culture and customs. During his service, he had the opportunity to study the people and their day-to-day problems, and all this has stood him in good stead in writing his poetry.

Bansi (Flute) was Shri Ram Lal Sharma's first Dogri poem. Like his earlier Hindi poems, it also touched upon his favourite theme of Bhag-tivad (devotional aspect). The very word 'Bansi' conjures up a myriad associations in the minds of Sana-tinist Hindus, and one sees Lord Krishna playing upon the legendary flute. How's it that 'Bansi' has attained an immortal fame? asks the poet; and the reply is, because it has sacrificed everything in its love for Lord Krishna. Radha is famous because of her unequalled love for Krishna, but Bansi (flute) is even more so because of her supreme devotion. In love one always gives more than one hopes to get, and generally ends by receiving more. Bansi has given its life and so it has received more than any one else—the love and devotion of Krishna. That is why it is always in contact with Krishna's enamouring lips.

This is the height of Rama Lal Sharma's devotional aspect as also of his poetic fancy. The lilting rhythm of the poem conveys the lilting and bewitching

sweetness of the notes produced on the flute. And Shri Ram Sal Sharma's intimate knowledge of the forest life, of flora and fauna—an intimate part of the vast part of the cosmic Nature—aids him in depicting some very charming aspects of the various phenomena of life and Nature. For its sweetness, its deep grasp over the medium of language through which the ideas and details are conveyed, the fine flavour of nature-poetry and devotionism, 'Bansi' is unique in Dogri poetry.

The bulk of Ram Lal Sharma's poetry consists of such devotional songs and poems. Even those poems which deal with worldly aspects have an appendage of 'devotionalism'. This is his strength as well as weakness, for it shows a habit of mind which finds 'sermons in stones and books in running brooks'; but it also shows a mind which tries to impose moral values where there is no need to.

Shri Ram Lal Sharma has also written some poems of topical interest. His poems on Five-Year-Plan is not a mere jumble of statistical figures; it is indicative of his deep understanding of the motives underlying the launching of the plan. One feels such exhortation to people through such poems will enthuse them more than mere dry words of officialdom.

His poem on the hidden treasure of hills and mountains, which are awaiting themselves to be emptied for the welfare of mankind, exhibits the mind of a person who has continually lived in association with natural surroundings. Mountains are indicative of

courage and strength, and they require men of courage and strength to disgorge them of the precious wealth,—mountains, like so many other manifestations of Nature, have a strong urge to be of some use to mankind. Through fine similes and metaphors, Ram Lal Sharma makes a lucid exposition of his thesis on the utility of mountains.

Ram Lal Sharma has written poems on the theme of patriotism; the Chinese aggression has stirred his wrath, and he has risen like the brave soliders to fight the Chinese back; the soliders deployed guns; Ram Lal deploys his pen.

Though Ram Lal Sharma started writing in the afternoon of his life, there is an amazing degree of poetic talent in his creations. His style is lucid, his expressions clear. A deep moral fervour prevades his poems. The figures of speech, which he is rather fond of, add to the embellishment of his poems and make them more easy to comprehend. However, the technical aspect of verse from—metre and rythm—sometimes are not perfectly handled, but it is not a major drawback. The high moral tone, the lucidity of expression and the loftiness of ideas, lend his poems an imaginative quality, rich in thought and feeling.

Shri Ram Lal Sharma has also written some prose pieces and short-stories which exhibit his keen observation, a pithy style, distinguished by subtle humour and irony. He was awarded the second prize for his book of poems 'Kiran' by Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages in 1964.

Basant Ram (1906.....). Once the issue of regional languages had become clear, it was easier for Dogri to come to its own. Those people who felt shy of writing or speaking in Dogri now felt there was nothing to be ashamed of if they wrote in Dogri. Not only that. When in the Mushiaras, Dogri poets were greeted with applause all their hesitation disappeared and they began to take pride in writing Dogri poems. Those masses of the people who, for all purposes, were considered ignorant and illiterate, strangely but warmly, reacted to the poems when they were recited in the Mushiaras, for they knew and understood the language which the poets spoke. At the same time, from the applause of the people, the poets realised what the people wanted from them. So, it was a process of mass appeal and mass criticism wherein the poets learnt as much from the public as much as they entertained and educated them. The result was that a crop of new writers emerged on the literary scene. Among them were Basant Ram, Barkat Pahari, Chuni Lal Kamla, 'Chamak', Balkrishna, Durga Dutt Shastri, Ram Krishen Shastri and others.

Basant Ram belongs to that section of the population who have, due to the cruel system of casteism, always held an inferior position in society. Due to not-to-good environment, Basant Ram remained, and still is, uneducated. But he has eyes which see and a heart which feels. Education only helps to develop the mind if it is there, and Basant Ram has a sensible mind. He was an attendant in the hospital and knows the privations which men belonging to his class and status—in the social and economic sense—have had to undergo. Therefore, there is in him a recogni-

tion of the social limitations which unfortunately have hindered the full growth of his poetic talent. There is the same humility and self-consciousness in his poetry which has been his share in actual life.

But to say this is not to underestimate the gifted mind of Basant Ram. He has a keen observant eye and that natural fertility of mind which we witness in innumerable, though anonymous, writers of folk-songs. And yet Basant Ram's art is more self-conscious; we know from every poem about his authorship, for in the last verse of his poems, he mentions his name. There is in Basant Ram the capacity not only to laugh and make us laugh at others, but to laugh at himself. Not quite infrequently, he speaks with the tongue in his cheek. This allows him much scope for manoeuvre, ability and turning the table on others.

His poem "Kharâ hâ mein Grân" (I was better off in my village) makes us laugh at Basant Ram, but then, by a surprise turn, we cannot help feeling that the joke is as much directed against us. The utter naivety is quite delightful, and we can imagine how the utter confusion of city life, which has become a part and parcel of our daily routine appears so awkward to a villager. His 'Basant' (Spring) is full of mild irony and a mild melancholy. In many cases, Basant Ram write poems about topical interest. His poem 'Haspatâl' (Hospital) portrays truly and vividly the indifference of the medical staff, the callousness of nurses, the irrational system of distribution of medicines, the misery and suffering of the patients and the condition of the low-paid attendants. But Basant Ram does not allow the poem to become an

exercise in cynicism. This is as much a flaw as a quality, for it makes his poems at once dated.

On account of his illiteracy, Basant Ram's poetry lacks in the refined artistry or logical development; but his poems have, in their naive way, a quality to entertain and even instruct. His irony, though it contains humorous elements, is sometimes subtle. He is one of the good comic poets of Dogri

Barkat Pahari (1907....). Barkat Ram was born in the farthest corner of Jammu, in the town of Doda. His father, L. Devi Chand, was a well-to-do businessman, but at the time of Barkat Ram's birth, the economic condition of his father had deteriorated. Barkat Ram saw the transition from a well-to-do position to that of poverty. Their houses were sold, business was ruined and his family reduced to debt. In these conditions, Barkat could not seek education even though his desire to study was strong.

Barkat Ram had seen the plight of his family, If this could happen to them, it could have and must have happened with others as well. There was generated in him a feeling of revolt against usury, against those rich persons who thrived at the cost of the poor. At the same time, he grew conscious of the other maladies afflicting the body-politic of our society. Communalism was a bane; feudalism and capitalism tended to make the country weaker and poorer. People must be warned against these evils, but what should be the medium? Barkat Ram used also to write in Urdu and Punjabi, but the Dogra masses partially understood him, nor did they enjoy his

poetry in these languages. If he wanted the people to beware of the social evils, he should speak to them in the language they understood better. And therefore, he took to writing in Dogri. His view was that in the coming era Dogras will have to struggle against feudalism, capitalism and other forms of exploitation, and in that struggle, Dogri has to play a very vital role. As such those persons who are, working for the poetry development of Dogri are, in fact, serving their nation and their country. It is, hence, obvious that Barkat Ram's poetry was not to roam into the meadows of conceit or wander in the lands of romance but it was to be concerned with people and their problems. Partly, it was a poetry of patriotism which had flourished well soon after the tribal raids of 1947-48. Some of his poems were published in Jago Duggar in 1948, a Dogri Sanstha publication, consisting of the selected poems of the modern poets and the folk-songs of Duggar, along with the poems of Pt. Ganga Ram and L. Ram Dhan. Majority of his poems are still unpublished. but a great bulk of them he recited in the poetic symposia organised by Dogri Sanstha of different occasions in Jammu. His Utthō Sher Jawānō. (Wake up oh ye lion-hearted!) is a poem blazing with the flame of patriotism. Duggar is a land whose borders extend far and wide. Due to our inaction and mistakes, we have lost our grandeur and greatness; we are now slaves. The thieves and looters call us good-for-nothing. It is time we fought them and won back our lost glory. Patriots and generals like Dido and Rajendra Singh have sacrificed their lives for its liberty. Though poverty and starvation prevail, Duggar yet is the store-house of wealth. The tribal raid is a blessing

in disguise, for it has given jolt to the brave Dogras. They will now fight the external enemy and the internal exploiters. This country belongs to Hindus and Muslims, and to defend its honour and integrity is the bounden duty of every Dogra.

Mōtiā (Jasmine) is a reflective poem. The poet reflects that Motia is torn from its native stalk but it sheds beauty wherever it is present. It brings glory to the lovers, beds, it spreads its fragrance everywhere and its flowers are threaded into a garland. How much better it would be if our people could also be threaded together in unity. We would never have become slaves and our country would have been stronger, if we had remained united.

Manūkh Te Pañchī (Man and Bird) is a poem in dialogue form. It expresses, through dialogues between a man and a bird, that though one may be offered all the luxuries and comforts of life, slavery is after all slavery. You cannot do anything you like to; you have to do those things which you don't want to.

Barkat Ram's style is didactic, for he feels that art cannot be for art's sake alone. But at times he gives a free reign to his fancy and conjures up a fascinating picture of the belles living in our hilly regions. The poem has conceits and is marked for its lilting quality. The beauty of the natural scenery, instead of overshadowing the beauty of the belle, rather throws it into relief. She is the ornament of the country; in beauty and grace she looks like a goddess who has descended from heaven. Even the mountains are struck dumb with wonder and amazement, and as for the birds, she is the jungle-queen, or rather a diad.

Barkat Ram's poetry lacks finer qualities of language and thought, but his poetry is replete with the sentiments of patriotism and social reform. His poetry represents the typical trends in Dogri poetry which were prevailing between 1947 and 1953.

Chuni Lal Kamla (1912—1960). Chuni Lal Kamala was primarily a poet of Punjabi, and had been versifying for the last twenty-five years. His close associations with the famous Punjabi poets, Shri Jamana Dass Marji of Sialkot and Bhaghat Tara Chand Gosain helped him develop his poetic art and outlook. His 'Shiv Darshan', Sāire Kashmir and Nayâ Kashmir are his publications in Punjabi poetry. But because Chuni Lal Kamla had spent a major part of his life in Jammu when the movement for Dogri language and literature was winning new friends and admirers, he could not remain isolated from this movement. He felt he owed something to the land where he lived and made his living. Moreover, the tribal raid from Pakistan and the oppression of the poor at the hands of the rich, powerfully influenced him in his thinking and writings. His Punjabi poems, though they were quite appreciated in Punjabi writers' meets, could not sway the Dogri-speaking people so much. Kamla listened to the call of the time and wrote about Duggar, its people and their problems. The influence of Punjabi poetry and language is there even in his Dogri poetry; sometimes it creeps quite imperceptibly.

Chuni Lal was a dealer in betels and cigarettes. He came to know a large variety of people, some simple and unsophisticated, some snobbish and aristocratic, some poor and some rich. He studied them and wrote

about them in his poems. Being himself of lower-middle class origin, he wrote poems on proletariat. One of his most famous poems in Dogri is *Karsâneih Di Dūniyā* (The world of the tillers), It is an authentic picture of the rural atmosphere, of the peasants and their existence, for you cannot call their existence as 'living' in the real sense. It is a powerful indictment of the system of exploitation where the tiller remains unfed and the weaver remains unclothed. It reminds one of Shelley's revolutionary poem 'Song To The Men Of England'. Only Kamla's poem ends on a more compromising and reformatory note.

Chuni Lal Kamla does not rank among the major poets but his simple themes and sincere feelings helped him to enjoy a peculiar position in Dogri poetry at a time when Dogri was written by only a limited number. He passed away in 1960¹.

Durga Dass 'Chamak' (1912–1960). Mr. 'Chamak' was born in 1912 in the village Lala Chak which is very near Jammu city. After reading upto primary standard in the local school, 'Chamak' came to Jammu for further studies. But before he could get his M. & S L C he gave up studying.

'Chamak' started writing poem at an early age and the influence of Dewan Narsingh Dass Nargis is quite visible in his work. He came to writing Dogri when a crop of new Dogri writers appeared in the field of Dogri literature. Earlier, he used to write in Punjabi and Hindustani. The subject of the

1. For Kamla's Dogri poetry, see ^AJago Duggar, a Dogri Sanstha Publication, 1948.

majority of Chamak's poems is politics. He honoured the wishes of of the people who wanted him to write in Dogri in 1948-49, for his forceful style of recitation in mushiaras had the capacity to sway the feelings of his audience. Durga Dass 'Chamak' is full of devotion for the bravery and glory of Duggar, and he made it a point to express his devotion for this celebrated land in his utterance; 'To overcome difficulties without losing their wits is the main characteristic of the Dogras, and as in the past, so in future also, Dogras will tide over any crisis by their courage, devotion and perseverance¹.

This type of poetry was specially appealing to Dogra public in the first flush of patriotism which was awakened on account of the unwarranted attack on their land by Pakistan-inspired tribesmen, and 'Chamak' attained fame by conforming himself to the popular taste.

'Mârnâ Sâ Verū Gi, Yâ Yâ Pâpâ Hankârâ Gī, is almost metaphysical in conception though it is full of local and topical allusions. Instead of killing each other or destroying each other's happiness, Hindus and Muslims should have destroyed their common enemy (the English at that time), or they should have eschewed vanity and ego. But for this ill-will, which was sown in India by the foreigners, this land of Gandhi would not have been torn by bloody conflicts, which ultimately led to its partition. The poem is a stirring call to Hindus and Muslims to rise above their petty jealousies and squabbles. The language is,

I. See Jāgō Duggar.

no doubt, a mixture of Dogri, Punjabi and Hindustani but the style is forceful and rhetorical. The poem travels back to the good old days when Dharma or religion was considered supreme, and moves forward to the present-day conflicts based on irreverence, vanity and jealousy. 'Chamak' passed away in early 1960¹.

Ram Nath Shastri (1915.....) Shastri Ji was born in 1915 in a respectable Brahmin family. He sought education in schools and Raghunath Pathshala. He continued his studies and obtained Shastri, Prabhakar and M. A. degrees. After completing his studies, he joined the Education Deptt. of the J & K Government, and is, at present, Professor of Sanskrit in Maulana Azad Memorial College, Jammu.

Prof. Shastri started his literary career as a short-story writer in Hindi (and Gulabsingh and Data Ranu are two of his successful creations). He wrote one-act plays, prose songs, and essays. He was the Secretary of Hindi Sahitya Mandal and did a lot for Hindi's cause.

In 1946, the Quit Kashmir agitation was started. At that time only Pt. Hardutt Shastri and Dinu Bhai Pant wrote poems in Dogri, and Bhagwat Prasad Sathe wrote short stories. In forties, the movement for regional languages was becoming stronger in different parts of India, and it was bound to have its impact on the lovers of Dogri. Ramnath Shastri recognised the new trends and he devoted himself whole-heartedly to the cause of Dogri. In 1943, Dogri Sanstha was formed which, in addition to Dogri, espoused the cause of Dogri-speaking people in and outside the State. It also worked for

1. For Chamak's Dogri poems, see Jāgō Duggar.

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restoring the lost glory of the Dogras in the field of art, sculpture and literature.

Prof. Shastri started writing poetry at a late stage. In the beginning he wrote short-stories, and wrote the first Dogri play *Bâwâ Jittô*, which was successfully staged at many a place. His poems were first published along with those of others, in *Jâgô Dūggar*, an anthology of Dogri poetry, in 1948. These poems lay stress on two things: (i) the glorious past of the Dogras (ii) the need to bring back their greatness in the present times. They are full of noble sentiments, a patriotic zeal, and the appeal is made to the feelings of the Dogras to rise to the occasion. These poems have a forceful style although they lack the verbal melody which Shastri acquired in his later poetry. In *Eh Bañjar Banīyân Kiyân Kesar Kaiâryiân*¹ (How we have made barren these blossoming flower-beds), he exhorts the Dogras to wake up from their slumber, welcome the new era and restore the past grandeur of the land. The hostile elements have had their day; it is now the turn of the Dogras. In "*Eh Kun Aâyâ*"¹ (Who's come there?), he expresses confidence in the new forces of progressivism; the old forces of ignorance and reaction are giving way, and all sections of the people are awake to build up a happy future. Dogras should also rise up: the workers and peasants, the warriors and the patriotic mothers. Those who are awake have successfully shaped their future. "The old night is on its way out, and the new light, though hesitant, is about to enter." This line from his "*Eh Râtti dâ Khîrî Belâ*" though

1. *Jâgô Duggar*, poem by R. N. Shastri.

said in a different context, symbolises the new dawn of the hopes and aspirations of the people¹. Shastri endeavoured through his poems and writings and speeches to prepare the Dogras to welcome this 'new morning'.

Shastri has written poems dealing with different aspects of the life of Dogras; he sometimes exhorts them to wake up; at others he criticises them for their indolence and inertia. He has also depicted the domestic scene vividly, the sorrow of the bride whose husband is gone out for making a living, of a young widow in whose heart the desires are still strong but the social barriers are stronger. Chakki² (the stone-grinder) is the poem dealing with the young woman who has to work hard on the Chakki to grind wheat and maize even at night when her mother-in-law and sister-in-law are fast asleep. The echo of Dattu's lines asking for advice how to reconcile her mother-in-law and sister-in-law to herself, which are further echoed in Padma's poems as well, show that the problem of strained relationship between the bride and her in-laws, in her husband's absence, is eternal. But this hard work at the Chakki is also a blessing in disguise. She keeps busy and forgets or tries to forget her lot. There are many similarities, though many more dissimilarities also, between the two. Both are awake when others are asleep; Chakki seems to come to life at her mere touch. But whereas the two sides (two stones) are ever-united in Chakki's case, her real heart is with her husband who is in a strange

1. Prât Kiran, Page 46, Ed. by K. S. Madhukar
2. Ibid, Page 28.

land, and her body is like a prisoner in the house of her mother-in-law. From here the idea moves on to the prison and the comparison between the bride and the prisoner is deftly conveyed. The imagery of the prisoner working in the prison at the Chakki, forgetting everything else, is equally applicable to the woman who is trying to forget the separation of her husband, and her sorrows in her in-law's house. What would have been the lot of the prisoners if there were no Chakkis to work at? (Hard would be the lot if a woman had no companion like Chakki to weep her heart to!) The music produced by the two wheels of the Chakki in unison, indicative of their happiness, reminds her of her husband, and then she feels a fresh breath blowing over her whole being; it also fills her with envy over the happy lot of the Chakki. But it does not matter. When her husband returns, she will completely forget about her faithful companion, Chakki; she will forget all the miseries and sorrows, and then for her, there will be a new spring of joys.

The poem shows a maturity of thought, and its execution is masterly. It also shows the keen observation of Shastri. The rhythm of the poem is just appropriate to convey different moods of the sad woman—from sadness and irritation to envy, and eventual joy. The situations are all real but the true realism comes in the last stanza in which she tells the Chakki she won't remember her (Chakki) or her own miseries when her husband returns home. She would be too much preoccupied with her own happiness to look back to her sad past.

¹Eh Râtī dā Khīrī Bēlā is a beautiful poem but it does not seem to be an artistic whole. The first part is descriptive and the imagery is evolving out of the description. The idea of meeting or union is running through the first half. The strange meetings, which can be known by mind only, become clear in the references to girls as Parvatis, and their desires communicated through references to Parvati's desire for Shiva. The lines have the quality to transport one to mythology, and the combination of the concrete, the aerial and the mythical is fine indeed. The incoming of the slow-moving dawn is conveyed by the different sounds and voices which at once evoke an atmosphere of religious solemnity.

The second part deals with separation, for the young woman is permanently separated from her husband who is dead. In the first part, the rhythm conveys the joyous feelings and those of religiosity; in the second part, it conveys the sadness and puzzlement of the young widow. It also is an authentic picture of the cruelty which she has to suffer silently and endlessly. But the poem does not conclude logically; in fact it ends abruptly with a question mark. It gives the impression of pessimism, for the question which is forcefully put is not answered at all. This is a flaw in the presentation of the theme.

Shastri has written some verses about Dogri and Dogras, but at the same time, he has inflicted some blows on the opponents of Dogri, particularly on those Dogras who were hostile to Dogri. The Dogras could

1. Prât Kiran, Page 28.

not get any respect without Dogri, just as without its light moon is insignificant. If Dogri could not flourish in the past, it was because the bigots had tried to seal the fate of Dogri, and the torch of art and culture lit by the devouts of Duggar was blown out by some mad-caps. Side by side with this criticism of the hostile element, Shastri tried to create confidence in the minds of Dogri's lovers. Akh kēsi nīmī terī, (Why are you feeling self-conscious ?), Dhartī de Sūrke di mūrīye jawānī (Good days are returning to this earth), are eloquent with the pride in Duggar and Dogri. The love of the land, courage and bravery are also to be seen in his Rāvī de āareñ pāreñ, Pāise diyāñ Phūlyāñ. Also Shastri has written some memorable poems about Sanâsar, the famous beauty-spot, and Dogrâ Art Gallery dī ik Tasvīr. Chetâ is a moving description of the hurt feelings of a mother and her affection for her child.

Shastri believes in the human dignity, in the greatness of humanity and he feels the artists, the poets are born with a special aim to fulfil. Righteous people never fear anyone, and humanity is immortal. Man has been deceived by mirage a thousand times, but there are occasions when the seeds of victory are inherent in defeat (Amar eh Manūkhtā¹). And the poet being the brain of humanity, he remains unvanquished by any force, material or physical. The cupidity, desire for gold vanquishes even the wisest, but the mind of a poet is like the bar of paras (which has the quality to transmute baser metals into gold). Therefore, how can

1. R. N. Shastri in Prât Kiran, Ed. by Madhukar.

Paras be afraid of gold? This smacks of ego, but this is an ego born out of confidence in the noble role of the poet in society.

Shastri sometimes writes controversial poetry and his Rōṇp Kūnd is a controversial poem. It is artistically a successful poem. There is emotion and there is understanding, but he challenges the old notions of bravery and victory. Victory for whom? victory over what? The unjust victory of a country may also be the undeserved defeat of another country; a national hero, who has achieved victories over foreigners may well be counted a tyrant by them. The idea is challenging, but Shastri has not allowed himself to be overpowered by this idea. He handles it with coolness and reserve, although the fire to sustain the idea alive is lurking underneath.

From here, it is only a step forward to work for closer cultural affinities, and he has paid a handsome tribute to the land of Kashmir, its beautiful poplar and Chinar trees. At the same time, he has lauded the artists, the craftsmen and the poets like Laleshwari, Mehjoor and Nadim. Kashmir's culture is great, because like the Poplars and the Chinar trees, it has its roots deep in soil (Pāūdān—page 50, 52, Prāt Kiran, Ed. by Madhukar). And Shastri makes a cause with the forces of progress and peace which are active throughout the whole world. There are some moments of crisis in the human history, when men cannot do what they wish to; there is a suffocation. At that time, the poet recognises his duty and he uses his poetic talent to depict the true conditions of society. In 'Same dī-lāchārī' he writes about the suffocation in

Duggar, and clears the way for others to do so. Tadōñ Itihās Hasdā Āi is a revolutionary poem, for the result of suffocation and suppression is obvious. The seeds of revolt are taking roots and the storm is bound to arise, shattering the old, vested interests. But out of this disorder comes order and stability—the two great steps to progress.

Prof. Shastri has experimented in writing ghazals. Most of them do not, strictly speaking, imitate the pattern of Urdu ghazals as the ghazals of Deep and Kishen Smailpuri and Ved Rahi do, but they form their own class in Dogri literature. In some respects, Shastri can be called the innovator of Dogri ghazal (Madhukar has also written some in Shastri's style). They exhibit the forceful personality of the writer. Sometimes national matters are alluded to, and some combine the references to the past with the present factors.

Aijēn bī ōōs dabrī chā kadeñ eh bāaj āuñdhī āi,
Je yārēn dé bīnā hūñde, tāañ Kūshvā pāar l.ōī jañde.

This may be alluding to the conditions in 1953, although it seems to point to some past incident of the Dogras. It contains a general statement of truth as well. The first three verses (Prāt Kiran page 56) belong to Urdu style, but the other two are in the Dogri style. The lines

'Jaā dī Kañtā ne milan hī āī chōrī,
ō bajōgan gāi phūlleñ par rōī gāīāi.

are full of poetic conceit. Shastri does not write such poetry often but whenever he does, he shows a mind endowed with fancy. (These are not dew drops, but these are the tears of a woman who shed them in

grief on flowers when she had secretly come to meet her lover). This style may be compared to Fitzgerald's Rubaiyaat, and his allusion to the rose-flower and Cæsar.

In her Kâjal (collyrium) the flow of the Yamuna is
visible;

The smile on her lips looks like the small Ganges;

The eyes filled with love-longing are like
Saraswati,

It appears as if in her eyes is the holy Sangam of
Tribeni.¹

He is a critic, an essayist, a poet, story-writer and dramatist. His poetry possesses metrical skill and a thought-content which reminds one of 18th-century English literature. His poetry has fancy, though it lacks sometimes the qualities of high imagination. In reasoning also, he is like the 18th-century English poets. His style is not conversational and colloquial but literary, and many words are from Hindi. Shastri, at times, is a reflective poet, but he has a special genius for translation. Whatever may be said about his literary or Hindiised Dogri, Shastri¹ has succeeded in translating the spirit of Meghdoot of Kalidass and Bharatri Hari's Shataks in Dogri as also the plays like Post-office of Ravindranath Tagore. The dialogues are natural and the philosophical details are rendered in a literary style with a fair degree of competence and success.

Shastri is a prolific writer. He has also edited a large number of books in and on Dogri literature. There are very few writers who have remained unaffected by his influence, and his influence on the respective

1. Prât Kiran, Page 56.

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poetry of Yash Sharma, Ram Kumar Abrol, Madhukar, Ved Rahi, Padma, and Mohan Lal Sapolia is great indeed.

To have succeeded in getting so much done is an achievement; it would make any person a celebrity, and so Ramnath Shastri is. But he has done much more. He has himself contributed to enriching the Dogri literature by his works in the fields of poetry, prose and drama. At the same time, he has added to its volume by translating the classics from Sanskrit : Kalidass' 'Meghdhōṭ,' Bhartarihari's 'Nêetī Shatak,' 'Srinagār Shatak' and 'Vairāgya Shatak,' and a few plays of Ravindranath Tagore as also Tagore's Gītanjalī.

Dinoo Bhai Pant (1917). Although Pt. Hardutt Shastri was the first modern poet in Dogri, Dinoo Bhai Pant is the poet who gave new shape and outlook to it which suited the changed and changing times. Hardutt's approach to problems was social or socio-religious; Dinoo brought with him a new political and ideological consciousness without which Dogri poetry could not really be called modern. Of course, Dinoo himself had been inspired to writing Dogri poetry by Pt. Hardutt Shastri's poems.

Born in 1917 in the village of Painthal and in the family of orthodox Brahmins, Dinoo worked hard and stayed in Jammu to prosecute studies. He secured Visharda (Sanskrit) and Prabhakar degrees. In the beginning, he wrote in Hindi and his Hindi poems, Yug Chalâ (Time's on the move), Path par dēēp jalāñē vâle (The pioneers) and Hūnkâr are still remembered for their revolutionary spirit and lyrical quality. But when the movement for national liberation

was getting stronger in the country, there was a need to strengthen the local movement for self-rule. The best thing was to awaken the slumbering Dogra masses; and the best way was to exhort them in Dogri, the best form to appeal to their pride and honour was poetry. It is on account of these factors that Dinoo's earlier poems are aglow with a revolutionary fervour, vigorous language and powerful emotions. Sometimes there is a lack of proper restraint, and there is a deficiency of thought-content as in *Maṅgū Dī Chhabīl*, but then what was required was a jolt to the decaying system. Whereas emotional poetry would have succeeded and did succeed in waking up the masses, intellectual poetry simply would have passed over their heads.

Dinoo came of a family with average means. In his own village and in the city of Jammu he had seen how the workers and peasants worked hard for the whole day and yet they remained without two square meals, and those people who did not work at all still thrived and prospered. Why so? 'We toil in the scorching heat, tread the thorny path, we over-work ourselves and fill others, homes (with commodities) and still, why should we starve? why are our houses empty?' (page 40, *Jāgo Dūggār*.) Surely such a world was not worth-living; it needs must be changed (page 39, *Eh Duniyā; Jāgo Dūggār*); farmers and workers should give a last jolt to this crumbling system. And in his very famous revolutionary song, "*Ūth Majōōra, Jāg Kasānā terā vellā Aāyā hī*" (Wake up you toiler and oh you farmer, now it is your turn), he exposes the frauds created by the exploiters with the help of 'priestocracy' (Pant and Maulvi) who create fear in men's minds by telling them

about God, This fear of God is all humbug, created by the vested interests. The tide is against these selfish persons and one concerted effort will bring about their down-fall. It can be seen how much the poetry of later writers like Kishen Samilpuri, Taramani, Madhukar, and others is influenced by the poetry of Dinoo.

Dinoo was the first poet to go into ecstasy over the beauty of his mother-land: "Jāī Jāī Duggar des Sūhānā". It is a land of the saints and sages, of warriors and artists, and of a simple, honest and frank people and is endowed with a natural beauty. If any one did not appreciate its beauty it was because he lacked sympathy and vision; he should see with the poet's eyes (Mere Desā dā shalepā merī akkhīn kanne dikh) to appreciate and enjoy the beauty of his land. But Dinoo is no romantic escapist who does not see the prevailing conditions in his favourite land. The evils of feudalism and capitalism are still present. Maṅgū Dī Chhabīl was the expression of that angry mood and Dinoo was the first angry young man in Dogri. It tells of young Mangu who loses everything to the capitalist-exploiter and then he avenges his loss by burning the Sahukar's house and disappears into darkness. In this poem Dinoo's feelings have taken the better of his balanced judgement; he is like an anarchist, who in his exasperation knows only to destroy. The poem lacks poetic qualities although it abounds in revolutionary zeal. Like an immature artist Dinoo has sentimentalised his theme here.

MODERN POETS

His *Gūtlū*, published in 1945, is a collection of some poems, humorous and ironic. They became so popular that they were translated in Punjabi even and Dinoo became famous over-night. There is in these poems a flow, an ease and colloquial expression which are at once amusing and startling; the naivety is only apparent and its artlessness is in fact concealing the art. The poet is speaking, as it were, with the tongue in his cheek, and he uses his naivety to suit his end to make the people laugh, only to make them think afterwards. There is a satire which is the more effective because it is not against any individual but against evils of sham and hypocrisy in the society, and the absence of acrimony makes the poem more enjoyable. His 'Shehar Pehlō Pehal gaye' (First visit to city) is hilarious and so is his *Chachā Duni Chandā Dā Bihā* (Uncle Duni Chand's Marriage). The poems were an introduction to the poet, for they indicated a penetrating view and the versatility of the writer; they also showed the flexibility and dynamism of the language which could be made to meet every situation. And Dinoo did employ the resources of the language to express what was in his mind.

Dinoo's writings had a purpose and that purpose was to make the people conscious of the changing times. The evils of slavery and autocracy were to be thrown out, for the life of slavery was much worse than death even:

'Marne kōlā Bhī Maārā lōkō Jēnā iss gulāmi dā',
and therefore he exhorted in his famous poems of 'Ūth

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Majōōrâ' and 'Bōl Jawânâ hallâ bōl' to rise in revolt against the systems of feudalism, autocracy and captai-ism. He also dealt severe blows to communalists who knew nothing about religion but who were always ready to exploit the simple folk:

Maṇdar Masēēt Kadeṇ Jamīyāi nīṇ dikhe jineṇ
Uṇeṇ lūṇd lēādereṇ bagārī dī gal sārī.

(Those who never have been either to the temples or the masques, those perfidious leaders have spoiled the whole situation.) His hatred of injustice, autocracy and oppression are evident in his poetry. He has always been in the fore-front of the nationalist movement in Jammu province. In 1945, when the popular movement had started its agitation against the ruler of Chenani, he led the famous "exodus" with the stirring songs;

Tōōṇ āīṇ bas pāpīyâ, us dōōr chale.

Tere julmeṇ thōgṇ hoī majbōōr chalê.

(Settle you, oh tyrant ! We have been compelled by your oppressions to leave this land !)

He was naturally upset when the outsiders, who did not know the real situation, criticised every Dogra—thinking them also to be a part of the machinery of oppression:

Lōk méēnâ mââr de eh Dōgreṇ dâ Rāj āī,

Dōgreṇ dâ hāl maṇdâ, mildâ nīṇ sāgg āī.

(People revile us it is the rule of the Dogras, but (in such a rule) the condition of the Dogras is depressing; they do not have even ordinary meals to eat).

His pleasure was great when the national government was formed. However, awakening among the Dogras was necessary to defend the country against foreign aggression. In a duet between a brother and his sister, the words of the sister are inspiring on account of her patriotism. She exhorts her brother not to worry on her account, and he should buy guns by selling her ornaments.

Eh pâi kunji, bānde gāine khōli lāi sandōōk,

Becchī battī Jiyān thōāi rakhī lāi bandōōk,

Us marī jāāche sārā des sukhī rau,

Vēērā tūki teriyā jawāni dī sau.

'We may die but our country should live in peace and prosperity'. It is such noble feelings which were at the root of Dinoo's Vēer Gulāb which was published in 1945. Vēer Gulāb symbolised for Dinoo at that stage the bravery, nobility and grandeur of Dogras. Gulab Singh, the founder of the present State of Jammu and Kashmir, who extended its borders to Ladakh and Gilgit, was honoured by Maharaja Ranjit Singh of Punjab when, as a young man of sixteen, he fought the armies of Ranjit Singh to defend Jammu. This small epic in Dogri is replete with Veer-ras—the feelings of bravery and patriotism. The language is sharp and style is forceful. The words of Mian Motta are reminiscent of the words of King Henry V when Harry tells Westmorland, on the Eve of the battle of Agincourt, that only those persons should stay who had a stomach for bloody battles. The cowards should leave the battle for they only bring disgrace to their country. Dinoo's Vēer Gulāb has a vigorous style and full justice has been

done to the character of Gulab Singh. Dinoo's control over language is masterly and his versification mature.

In 1947, when Dogri Sanstha called for the unity of artists, Dinoo joined the movement and did a magnificent work. His poems indicated restlessness of his spirit, for the conditions even after independence had not fully improved. There are some poems which show his impatience with the capitalistic set-up and capitalists, (Kōdī Basānt and Aṛubb Bāīṛā), with the vacillations of the middle class, (yâ iddar hō yâ uddar hō) and unemployment. People want to have food for they do not shirk work. It is the responsibility of the Government to provide them with work (kam krâ te rutti de). The poems became popular, for they expressed the sentiments of the people, although the last-named poem lacked literary merit.

His Dâdī té Māñ is a constructive and conciliatory approach to the problem of Hindi and Dogri. There is no cause for quarrel between the two. Hindi is like a grand-mother to the Dogras and Dogri is their mother. Both have their importance and both are indispensable. The symbols of the child, mother and grand-mother as Dogras, Dogri and Hindi are artistically rendered in the poem. This poem occupies a special place in Dinoo's works, for it canalized his talents to more practical and constructive fields.

Dinoo is a Block Development Officer in the Government of Jammu and Kashmir's Dehat Sudar Department. He knows the problems facing the peasants and workers and he also realises the importance of five-year plans. People should be educated through

poetry, and his poems, Kamm Karnâ Sikh, Mañjal gī pujñe tãñ (Towards destination), Aâ Sharat badī laī Barōsarī (Let us accept the challenge to work hard) are written with this end in view. Dinoo's experienced mind is evident here but the qualities of Dinoo's earlier poetry—pungency, incisive style, vigour and humour—are absent from these poems. One suspects Dinoo is holding his real feelings in check. In Gūjarī (A Gujar belle), he has directed his poetic qualities to a romantic topic. But Dinoo is too great to be an escapist. He describes the beauty of Gujarī like the poet of "Shrīngār Ras", but for him Gujarī is something more than a young pretty woman. It is her spirit, her courage and action which are necessary in the present-day society. She is economically self-sufficient. She makes her living by doing physical labour. She is not a slave of gold nor does she care for anyone. Dinoo gives a new twist to her rôle in the modern world. She is not Sita of yore who did not cross the line when Ravan came to abduct her. She will rather defy such Ravana. She is carefree though not careless. She is the fearless daughter of Adam, undaunted as the first waves of the Ganga. The poem is rich in references to the Ramayana and the Bhagwat Puran. The reference to Radha at once shows the social values which Dinoo holds dear. Radha was a milk-maid and she represents action and the uninhibited spirit of humanity. Gujarī is the modern Radha, and as such the sister-in-law of Krishen Kanhai.

The poem has beautiful descriptions and a lyrical quality. The verbal melody—word and sound pictures—add to the charm of the poem. But Dinoo has not written many poems of this type.

Dinoo feels he cannot describe in poetry all what he feels in the present changed times. The trends have changed. He, therefore, has started paying more attention to prose literature—drama particularly. In drama, due to its larger space and larger number of characters, there is a greater scope for expressing one's real feelings without placing them out of perspective. He has collaborated with Prof. Ram Nath Shastri and Ram Kumar Abrol in writing *Namâ Grân*; and *Sarpañch* and *Sanjâli* are the two plays written by Dinoo alone.

Dinoo's contribution to Dogri literature—prose and poetry—is very great. He is one of the best writers in Dogri. His command over language—the conversational style and incisive tone mixed with humour, irony and satire—is surpassed by few, if any. Few people understand the lot of the common man in a better way, and none has expressed it with so much felicity and vigour.

Durga Dutt Shastri (1917.....). As the movement for Dogri gained momentum, and as the number of 'Kavi Ghoshtis' increased, which were organised in different parts of Jammu, the number of new writers in Dogri was also multiplied. Durga Dutt Shastri, Shri Ganga Dutt Shastri 'Vinod', Ram Krishan Shastri and Sham Datt Prag also started writing in Dogri. They have not given up writing Hindi poetry; even now they will like to be called Hindi poets, yet they could not withstand the onward rush of the new wave of enthusiasm for Dogri. The impact of Hindi is there in their Dogri poetry for everyone to see,—their diction, their metre, their style, nay, sometimes their very mode of thinking are influenced by Hindi. But their exercise in Dogri poetry is as much a desire to

satisfy their natural instinct of paying their debt to their mother-tongue, as it shows their consciousness of the growing importance of Dogri in our State.

Durga Dutt Shastri is a school teacher. In his poetry one finds subjects which are reflective, topical and descriptive, but in his poetry the moral note predominates. Didacticism comes naturally to him, because he is a teacher by profession. It is the reason's voice which one hears when one reads Durga Dutt, and the finer sentiments which spontaneously communicate themselves to the reader are lacking in his poetry. The melody and lyrical intensity are seldom to be seen, but in their place there is the metrical talent as well as the argumentative skill. Durga Dutt is a religious person, and his poems are short songs of a devotional nature. But because he lives among the people, he tries to import moral and religious values to them. He has also written poems on patriotic themes.

Ganga Dutt 'Vinod' (1918.....). Shri Ganga Dutt Shastri 'Vinod' is a highly qualified Lecturer of Sanskrit in S. P. College, Srinagar. He is studious and patient, and has written in Sanskrit, Hindi and also in Dogri. His poems generally deal with mysticism, but if his topics are recondite, they appear more so on account of his style and unfamiliar references and descriptions. Shri Vinod has yet to publish his poems in Dogri, but his collection of Hindi poems, 'Ullol', has recently been published.

Bal Krishan (1919.....). Born is 1919 in Ambgrota village of Jammu Tehsil, Bal Krishan is

one of those poets who in the early days of the Dogri movement took to writing Dogri poems. Bal Krishan was influenced by the circumstances around him and the oppression of the poor by the rich. The annoyance, which he felt over the political and social exploitation, of the many by some, found its expression in his poetry. Being the son of a Brahmin peasant, he understood well the exploitation of the tiller at the hands of the Zamindars. His experience as the son of an agriculturist filled him with sympathy for the farmers and workers of the land.

Bal Krishan by his hard work attained Master's degree and is at present working as a Lecturer in one of the Government Colleges of the State. He is well-versed with the literatures of Hindi, Sanskrit and English.

In his poems one finds the revolutionary spirit, the impatience of a young idealist who finds reality harsher than his dreams. But Bal Krishan is not merely a visionary; he realises that all the miseries of mankind will come to an end when they live and breathe in an atmosphere of freedom and liberty. His language is forceful and clear, his ideas are well-arranged and expressed logically. His poems achieved a distinct popularity, for his topics dealt with the problems which are common to most of the people who till the land and work in the fields. Bal Krishan possesses a progressive outlook, and his poems are a translation of that outlook.

In his *Jhūnak*, we find the idea being expressed through the pattern of different kinds of imagery. The night is fading fast and the rays of light are

piercing through the dark. The dark night symbolises the human miseries, perpetrated by the selfish and autocratic regimes, and the morning sun represents the new progressive forces of national Government. The night-birds, the dangerous and ugly creatures like snakes are disappearing. It is time for the workers and peasants to wake up from their slumber and shake off their chains of slavery. If they don't do so now, they will lose all chances of freedom and emancipation.

In his *Dèsé dī Berī* there has been maintained a balance between the two forces of reaction and progress, and the boat is, as if it were, in a whirlpool. There are two pulls, both in the opposite directions. The imagery of storm and clouds and hail is adequate to the theme, but one never has any doubt as to where Bal Krishan's real sympathies lie. The country (boat) is determined to move towards the haven of peace and progress, although the boatmen (autocrats) are trying to lead it towards disaster, to the deep fathoms of communalism and selfishness, but the passengers are bent upon heading towards the goal where the sky is clear and storms have disappeared.

Bal Krishan has been recently transferred to Jammu, and once more planted on the natural soil of his birth. It is hoped his poetic genius will once again sprout forth with new leaves and blossoms.

Shri Ram Lal Gupta (1920.....). Shri Gupta belongs to Udhampur District. He is a prominent publisher and book-seller, and has written some good poems, depicting the rennainsance which has enlightened

the people after achieving independence, but none of his poems has been published so far.

Ram Krishan Shastri (1924.....). Like Durga Dutt Shastri, Shri Ram Krishan Shastri is also essentially a didactic poet. He is a Librarian in Shri Raghunath Sanskrit Library and his study is wide. Through references and allusions to the glorious past, he exhorts people to imbibe in them the moral values and revive the glorious past of the country. His style and metre owe not a little to Sanskrit and Hindi poetry, but he has the capacity to combine in his poems the general and the topical. 'Basâkhî' celebrates not only the arrival of the new year, but all that the new year stands for, and what it should bring in its wake—it should mean the coming of good days and the end of all the evil and wickedness.

Shri Romal Singh (1925). Shri Romal Singh was born at Billawar in Kathua District of Jammu Province. At present, he is working as a Forester in the Forest Department of Jammu and Kashmir Govt.

He has been writing poems for the last five years and has written some good poems depicting the various aspects of five-year-plans. His approach is practical and he writes with a view to educating his people. He uses the language of the common man and his style is direct.

Tara Samailpuri (1926.....). People's poet—this is how Tara Mani can be described. He is the one poet who resembles Dinoo Bhai Pant in so far as the poetry of both of them deals with the problems of the people.

Dinoo belongs to Painthal; he has taken part in the agitation against oppression of the Chenani ruler. He has seen Katra and Ghar and knows them intimately. In short, Dinoo belongs to the hilly areas of Jammu. Tara Samailpuri is a native of Samba which is in plains. It is a Kandi area, where, in the scorching heat of the sun, people had to, and at some places still have to, bring drinking water from a distance of miles. The people are, therefore, hard-working and tenacious in their qualities. It is the same Kandi about which Ganga Ram wrote his famous *Kaṇḍī Dā Basnā*. In their environments, Dinoo and Tara Samailpuri belong to two different climatic regions. But they are from the people and live among them; they understand them and speak their language. It is on this account that their ways of writing are so much similar to each other's. Both write in a language which has the tone of speech; the element of humour and satire is present in their poetry, and the subject of their poetry is the people who have to live in the humblest of surroundings, and work hard and yet be deprived of ordinary comforts. Belonging as they do to the lower middle class families, they understand the hard lot of the common man.

All these things are present in their respective poetry. As Tara Samailpuri himself says, he first started writing poetry after listening to Dinoo Bhai's *Gūṭlūn* which contains abundant comedy and satire. These two ingredients are present in Tara Samailpuri's *Eh Kūn Sābb nē laṅgā dē* and *Gilārā*. The former poem contains both comedy and satire. The description of the rich man who seems puffed like a balloon is hilarious; it is an exaggerated account and is like

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the comedy of humour, where one particular aspect is emphasised. Herein the aspect of his rotundity is stressed which fills the reader with a gay laughter. At the same time, the portrait is a satire on the capitalists and the capitalistic system. The fatness is due to the fact that he has secured a big contract; he walks fast, for the days of the system which he represents are numbered. He is black of heart and does black deeds—black-market. The poem has satire with a light-hearted comedy. This approach, which the poet has acquired from Dinoo Bhai, is effective, because while pleasing it reveals many things. There is a difference though. Whereas Dinoo poses a problem and answers it, Tara Samailpuri only poses it without always resolving it. Dinoo is superior to and maturer an artist than Tara Samailpuri.

Gilârâ is a light-hearted poem on the female dress; it is a mild satire on the fashion of wearing loose designed dress, gilara, which gives rise to a number of comparisons in the poets' mind, all of them exaggerated to establish his point that the dress is not a sober one.

Kadū Jâg eh Bimârî is again a satirical poem. Though it contains humorous situations, but the satire is more telling because of the comic note. A young girl is suffering from hysteria and the lack of proper knowledge and ignorance of this disease leads the people to surmise that she is visited by some goblin or haunted by some fiendish spirit. Instead of curing her by some scientific treatment, she is tortured and primitive methods are applied to cure her of this 'disease'. It is a criticism of superstition, of ignorance where every ailment gives rise to thoughts of ghosts

and spirits, and sacrifices to be offered to pacify the angry spirits. The poem suggests, in the end, that hysteria cannot be cured by incantation. Medical treatment by a doctor is required.

The tone of the poem is conversational and its theme is one which concerns people. Being one of them, Tara Samailpuri understands them and tries to educate them. His *Kūṇḍliyāñ* also is a satirical attempt, and quite hilariously, he dwells upon the ill-effects of the excessive drinking of liquor and smoking of 'charas'. The tone is familiar and style is intimate.

His birth and stay in Kandi areas have familiarised him with the unbearable hardships of the people living there. His *Kaṇḍī dā Basnā* is clearly inspired by the poem of the same title written by Pt. Ganga Ram in the reign of Raja Ranbir Singh. But Tara Samailpuri's poem is the longer of the two. And it covers many more aspects: of the hot climate, the dangerous insects during summer, the animals who are without water to drink and fodder to chew, the hardships people have to suffer to grow crops, and to bring drinking water from distance of miles. No concerted efforts have been made to end water-shortage. Although few lorries do carry water for some villages but this is insufficient. The poem has some topical allusions, like the starting of water-carriers; its canvas is broader than that of Ganga Ram's *Kaṇḍī Dā Basnā*, but if it gains in breadth, it loses in depth. It does not have the pregnancy, the brevity and intensity of Ganga Ram's poem. Its tone is bitter and it lacks the poetical quality of Ganga Ram's '*Kaṇḍī*'. But it

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shows Tara Mani's grasp over his subject and his acquaintance with the people's problems. The style of Taramani is forceful as witnessed earlier in *Kadūn jāg eh Bīmāri* and also in his later *Fāūjī Pensioner* (Retired Soldier-Pensioner). The poem *Fāūjī Pensioner* is a compassionate narration of the worries of a soldier who goes out of his country to fight for others and on retirement gets a pension of Rs. 5/- P. M; and to get that amount he has to come to Jammu after travelling a distance of many miles in the sweltering heat. It also is a censure of a system which allowed such things to happen—the pensioner receives the last and the best payment at the hands of death: he is free from all his misery and worries. The poem focuses attention on this burning problem of the unfair treatment meted out to those soldiers who fought—no matter for the glory of the British—in the battle-fields, suffered a lot and finally suffer death in the conditions of abject poverty.

Tara Samailpuri has seen many ups and downs of life: he has grappled with the economic subjugation. If in spite of man's hard work and best labours he does not get his due, there is something wrong with the social order, with the basic set-up of society. What is this set up for? To get rid of such a state of affairs, a change must come. Tara Samailpuri is people's poet and he voices their feelings. In this respect, Tara is an artist who uses his medium of art for the sake of life. In *Mazdōōr* (Labourer), he poses the problems before the peasants. In *Keh jūg Badlōndā Jā kardā?* there is a big question mark. Are the times really changing as the leaders or some people

contend? The facts do not warrant such optimism, for the contrast between the rich and the poor, the haves and the havenots still remains with the same intensity and force. But Tara Samailpuri develops his themes and widens his outlook as in *Hūn Sâri Bârî ââî āī*. He recognises the changed environment and the demands of time. Now there is no need to work hard without getting the fruits of their labour. And those who have been exploiting the workers and riding always in cars, leading a life of luxuries without doing any work—their days are numbered now. They have to get down from their cars, for the dust which they raised by their cars has assumed the form of a storm. *Chal Manâ* (Lead me my heart) is an expression of that mood when there comes a touch of impatience with the existing state of affairs and an alternative is suggested. There is need for a world where there is no exploitation, hunger, poverty; where there is happiness, equality and peace. The poem does not indicate frustration for it suggests a new order of things which it is possible to bring about. *Bekâr Nāū Jawân Te Kavî* (The unemployed youth and the poet) is in a question and answer form. The young man is unemployed and helpless. He comments on poverty and exploitation in the society although freedom and national Government have come. The poet advises the youth not to be dismayed. They are not alone today; their comrades are millions of workers all over the world who have the capacity to change the system now prevailing in society. Only determination is required.

There is a gradual development in Tara Samailpuri's outlook and his ideas are maturing. Now he no longer

poses a problem; he also suggests its solution. His language and tone are those of the people, and this quality lends a conversational and intimate touch to his poems; they look more real.

Tara Samailpuri is generally occupied with the people's problems, but he has snatched some moments to roam in the domain of nature, to glean some snippets from there. *Bârâ Mâh te Bâhârân* (Twelve months and seasons) is on the lines of the poetry about seasons seen in a number of folk-songs and which, in modern Dogri poetry, was first started by Almast. No one denies the authenticity of detail but Tara's descriptions lack Almast's melody and abandon. They are graphic no doubt, and the art of Tara Samailpuri shows signs of maturity. This type of poetry is new to Dogri and to Tara Samailpuri, for the poem is an elaborate description of seasons and changes that are taking place during the twelve months of the year. (See portion on Tara Samailpuri in *Mag Dhōli*).

The imagery is well-knit into the poem's pattern. The standing crops, while shaking under the blowing winds, appear like young girls who look graceful when they bend; the wind seems to be combing their hair—the sight is beautiful and the jubilant farmers dance to the beat of the drums. The seasons and festivals are inter-related and different activities of the people of different occupations are highlighted. Tara Samailpuri has carried this type of poetry farther in his poem, *Unsambe Gēt* (Unending songs), published in Yojna, iJuly, 1960. The poem is written in free verse, but it has a melody and charm of its own. The poem so far is Taramani's best and is a rare example of beauty and

maturity of expression in Dogri. The verbal melody—alliteration and assonance—the music found in springs and rivulets, the beauty found in flowers, birds and other objects of nature, are described with skill and artistry. The imagery is involved and knit into the design of the poem. Nothing is extraneous but an integral part of the whole conception, nicely executed. Tara Samailpuri's virtuosity as well as his art is dazzling here. There is sensuous beauty and also beauty of nature; there are some painful aspects of misery also, but all these consitute life, and life is beautiful and living is beautiful. Who says they do not possess any charm or music? The poem is descriptive. And the surprising thing is that Tara Samailpuri has expressed it in Dogri—a simple colloquial language—which shows its dynamic quality and rich possibilites. The poem is also indicative of new change taking place in Tara Samailpuri. He had written about people's problems. The style was journalistic; now it is getting really poetic.

Ved Rahi in his Jagdiyân Jôtân, (Torch—flames) page 16, has said that there is no odour of flowers, love-laughter in Tara Samailpuri's poetry. It is true that at the time of Rahi's book, Tara Samailpuri had written no such poems. But Bâhârân and Unsambe Gēēt are steps in that direction. Tara Samailpuri is now trying to make up for the lack of sensuous beauty, the sober but charming aspects of life, of deep reflective, melodic and the truly artistic qualities in his earlier poetry. The start has already been made—a good start—and with his keen observation, the resources of language at his command and the sympathy required

for every great creation, he is sure to win new trophies in the service of Apollo.

Tara has written a book 'Dōgrī Kahâvatkōsh'—a collection of Dogri sayings and proverbs, with their equivalents in Hindi and Urdu. This is a useful work published by the State Cultural Academy which will facilitate the work of compiling the Dogri Dictionary and Grammar. Tara is now growing maturer in handling more difficult and thoughtful themes, but he still retains control over his colloquial expressions which lend a native charm to his writings.

Yash Sharma(1927.....). The name of Yash Sharma reminds one of the poet of Melâ, Bañjârâ and Sañjâ de dēep, for it is on account of the qualities of these poems that Yash is better known to Dogri audiences. Yash is a singer-poet and his poems sung in a melodious tone won for him and for Dogri poetry a respect in the hearts of the sympathisers of Dogri. And his recitation has a charm which glosses over the deficiencies in his metre or technique.

Yash started his poetic career with his Hindi poems. Earlier, he used to recite the poems of Ravindra Nath Tagore and Bacchan. Bacchan's poetry, particularly his Madhū Bâlâ, Madhūshâlâ and his shorter lyrics, chief among which is Nīshâ Nīmantran, have left a deep impress on Yash's poetry and on his style. During 1944-1947 he had become famous as a poet in Hindi in the P. W. (now G. G. M.) College. The tribal raids brought him out of his small world of romance and he wrote Hindi lyrics exhorting the people to face the enemy. The death of Gandhiji shocked him and

he paid a tribute to the departed leader by writing a poem which was deficient in technical qualities but which contained an impassioned outburst of a wounded heart. And when Jammu Radio started functioning, he took part in programmes for the villagers (Grāīñ prāhāīñ Āaste). This made Yash realise that he had to do his duty towards his motherland and his mother-tongue, Dogri.

Yash came to Dogri with songs of patriotism. They were written in a simple and direct style, and his melodious voice had the quality to move the hearts of his listeners. Duggar had been threatened by the invaders and its honour and liberty were at stake. There was a need for 'Saving this Duggar-land and to die for its honour'. The song in the form of a duet between a man and his wife is an exhortation to the Dogras to die for the motherland as their ancestors did in the past. The song has force although it lacks sweetness. His Karsān (Peasant) is a challenging poem, for it brings back glory and respect to the peasant who is the leader of the population, and on account of whose generosity, the selfish people have become rich and wealthy and have acted in a cruel fashion. Sāṛe sālūne gī shīṛkāñ te chōwk pāide (We have to spend our nights by sleeping on foot-paths) is like a reply of the peasants and workers of the 20th-century to Shelley's call to them to revolt against the tyranny and oppression of their exploiters. The poem has a stirring quality when it is sung by some good voice; it is thoroughly revolutionary in content. The workers are no longer satisfied with their lot, for on their hard work are thriving the rich few who are living in palatial buildings, blessed with all

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the comforts and luxuries of life. The finer lyrical qualities are lacking, but then the poem would have lost in its force and vigour if it had gained in sweetness. *Sanjâ dâ Dîyâ* is fully inspired by Bacchan's *Nishâ Nimañtran* and is almost its rendering in Dogri. Yash evokes the mood in which there are pangs of separation—permanent separation—from the dear one who no longer is in this world. Why hurry then in the evening towards residence? Who is waiting for him in the lighted room? There is romantic yearning, an anguish which is deftly conveyed by Yash in this Dogri poem. Does it matter then if it is an imitation of Bacchan's poem?

The influence of Bacchan is to be seen even in Yash's other poems, for like Bacchan, Yash treats his themes in a lighter vein, with a romantic touch. Even pain is made sweet and narcotic by the opium-like quality of Yash's treatment. In fact pain no longer remains painful. Sometimes Yash speaks in the metre of the folk-songs. This at once brings him nearer the traditions of folk-literature and makes him a part of that current. But even when Yash writes about the most painful things, there creeps in his note a quality which makes this pain a nostalgic thing.

There is in Yash the habit to repeat himself. This is a drawback, for it limits the range of his thought and action. He has written a song based on the line of the folk-song: '*Gille gotte chūllī lāiye dhōōyē bhāne rōñī aāñ.*' (I shed tears by lighting the cow-dung cakes in the hearth and pretending that the tears come on account of the smoke'.) The song is complete

even in this state, for it tells so many things: the helplessness of a young married girl or of one who has had to face failure in love. The same idea is repeated by Yash in his *Geet*, last stanza (page 4, *Magh Dhōōli* Ed. by Shambu Nath). In the songs, Yash deals with the intimate personal or domestic problems and it is this intimacy, coupled with song-like quality, which makes them an attractive feature of Dogri poetry. Yash's genius is neither descriptive nor narrative; it is lyrical. That is why he has not written long poems, particularly no narrative poem, and whenever he has tried, as in *Melâ*, he has left them incomplete. It is in the depiction of a particular mood or a particular feeling that Yash is at his best. His best poems of patriotism are also short lyrics.

In his lyrics Yash adopts various devices. There are echoes of the folk-songs. In *Geet* 2 (pages 6, *Magh Dhōōli*, stanza 2), there is an echo of *Kūnjōo* and *Chanchalō*, wherein *Chanchalo* narrates how she is washing clothes and shedding tears. In *Merâ Des* (page 26, *Magh Dhōōli*), he makes use of a language which is loaded with the associations of folk-songs. The description of the white clouds in the sky is like the lambs on the green grass. The folk-spirit is evident but all the same there is a strong personal note which shows Yash's deep patriotism. He does not desire any thing else but that his country should ever live in his eyes (of his heart).

Not that Yash is incapable of describing a scene or narrating an event, but Yash's treatment of the theme is not sustained; it is sporadic and fitful

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Basant and Melâ are the two cases in point. The description of Basant (Spring) in which a Gori (belle), who is almost lost to herself in her enthusiasm to meet her lover and buy a Gajra (bangle), is superb. It is a festival time. The poem has a lilting tone, and the quickening tempo aptly describes the excited state of the Gori's mind, and the imagery of the belle in yellow dress who appears like the flowers of 'gutta' from a distance is well-knitted into the pattern. The similes are to the point, and 4th stanza (page 10, Magh Dhōli) is directly inspired by Wordsworth's 'Solitary Reaper,' which is moulded to the local environment and legend. But with all this, the poem is incomplete. After a particular stage, Yash's ideas, as it were, go dry and he stops abruptly. The song, insofar as it goes, is a fine lyric but somehow it does not give the impression of a rounded whole. It looks like a fragment, though a beautiful one.

Melâ is a wonderful fragment, for like Basant, it is also not a complete whole; its end is abrupt and unsatisfactory. But on first reading—and particularly when one listens to its being recited by Yash—one seldom notices it. The idea is also similar to that of Basant, but the imagery is more involved and complex; artistically it is an integral part of the poem. The atmosphere of the village fare is conjured up with rare skill and versatility. It is fully authentic. The similes are apt and local touches, rather allusions to the local history and local youth, who are drunk in the wine of valour, add to the charm of the poem. There are not many poems of sensuous beauty in Dogri. Almast, Kishen Samailpuri and Yash have written some poems

and *Melâ* certainly is one such poem. It leaves the mind fresh with its beauty, but one wishes it should not have ended the way it does.

Though the two important traits of Yash's poetry are his patriotism—his love for his land and its people—and his love of beauty which is expressed in his lyrics, Yash's poetry sometimes crosses these borders and becomes a part of the international movement for the solidarity of writers and their role in bringing about world peace. This influence in his poetry was transitional, but this gave us two of his fine poems, "Aman" (Peace) which he wrote in response to the call of Peace Conference and *Mere Sâthī* (Comrades). Yash, in this respect, transcended all national barriers and made his poetry truly international, for his comrades are not confined to a particular country but are living in all parts of the world—Mahjoor of Kashmir, Shastri of Jammu, Nazim of Turkey and so on. These writers also, like him, he feels, translate the feelings of humanity in their writings.

Yash has learnt a lot from Prof. Ram Nath Shastri and his influence on Yash's ideas, language and style is quite marked. But Yash has the capacity to borrow ideas and adopt and make them as his own. His language at times is influenced by Hindi and his style more often reminds of Hindi poetry, of Bacchan and Dinesh. There are no sustained flights in his poetry and the general body of his poems does not make a thick volume. But in the field of the poetry of patriotism and lyricism, Yash is in a class by himself.

Onkar Singh "Awara" (1928.....). It would be appropriate to describe Onkarsingh Awara in his own words: '*Māīn Awârâ Janam Janam dâ*' ...

(I am 'awara' (vagrant) from time immemorial;

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my feet never rest anywhere). He has been a stray traveller all along, and has failed to stick to any one job or any one place. Born in a village of Harsar in Kangra District of East Punjab in 1928, he had to face unfavourable circumstances from the beginning. His father died in his early childhood, and his uncle arranged for his education. Partition of the country gave him yet another blow, and many more were to follow. How apt are his own words to describe his lot!

Pīṛ kinnī shamār nīn hōā

Sārī āyū ch payār nīn' thōā

'There has been only one companion from my early life,

Hardship it is called, and sometimes it is also known as sorrow.'

Awara started taking interest in literature during his school days, and became well-versed with the famous writers of Urdu and Hindi. Before partition, when he was a student of D.A.V. College, he wrote his first poem (Râshtrâ Kī Unnatī Kâ Rhasya), which was published in 'Arya Jagat'. At that time 'Awara' was Sainik Guleri. After partition he had to wander from one place to another and from one profession to another. Even marriage could not bring any stability, and he was employed at Dharamsala in the Rehabilitation Ministry. His poetic career started from there. His writings were published in the local newspapers and magazines.

But the inspiration to write in Dogri came to him from his friend, Yogendra Mohan Kapur. After

acting as the editor of 'Dogra Sandesh' for some time, Awara became a teacher in his own village. And he could not stick there also. He came to Jammu and became a teacher in a private school.

Awara has stared at life from close quarters and knows what it means to be hard pressed by economic crisis. Suffering has taught him a lot, has made him maturer, and filled him with compassion and understanding for others. He knows what want is, what hunger and poverty are, and how, driven by the inexorable force of these two, even the good become bad, people lose their nobility and religious and moral values. And yet his vision has not been darkened, for he knows that so long as this economic factor is present in society, wrong things are bound to happen. This is the theme of his famous poem 'Chōr'. The night is dark and quiet except for the howling winds and the barking of dogs. It is cold and human beings are asleep. If on such a night somebody is out, he must have been driven by some dire need. The thief realises that theft is a sin and even death is better. He is startled by the sound of his own foot-steps, and sometimes the image of God also comes before his eyes. Hunger and poverty are driving him to such a course. His only son is ill and he has no money. Where there is hunger, sin is bound to invade that society; crime must become rampant. Want suggests new ways to satisfy itself. From the individual case, Awara generalises, and declares :

Chōreñ dī āī māññ būkh ūssī nīñ mārāyā
Chōreñ majbōoreñ gī je fāñsīyā bhī chāryā

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(Hunger is the source of theft, and unless hunger is banished, crimes are not going to vanish even if the criminals are hanged.) There is understanding in this attitude and a desire to refrain from giving a verdict against members of the society who have been perforce made criminals. Tara Smailpuri has also said the similar thing, 'Jittī laīndā Māânū mākē jūng'....

(Man conquers his enemies in the battle-field, but even he is vanquished by want and hunger.)

The descriptions in 'Chōr' are vivid and 'Awârâ' succeeds in evoking the dark atmosphere of night when "crimes" are committed. At the same time, Awara portrays objectively, though sympathetically, the condition of the thief's heart, his fears, pricks of conscience and also the great need which urges him on to his doom.

'Awara' is a social poet. He sees that money makes the mare go. "Greatness", respectability, comforts come if one has money. Money buys everything, even the modesty of young girls, the affection of mothers, respect of the respectables. Exploitation, in one form or another, is flourishing. Here is the Pujari who is exploiting the sacred name of God and religion; there is the fat Lala exploiting the innocent people and thriving on black-market. This is the theme of Awara's 'Bâzâr.' There are contrasts between the rich and the poor, between the well-fed and the hungry, between the women dressed in gorgeous costumes and persons who have nothing to hide their nakedness. The labourers are without shelter, the idle rich are enjoying themselves. The poet is selling the best of his songs

and the artist his art in order to satisfy their humble needs. How long will such exploitation or such trade last? The market imagery is consistently and faithfully portrayed, but the poet does not feel disheartened. There is yet a way out of all this. People should take care of themselves, of their interests. They should change the rule of tyranny and oppression and build a new society where life is worth living.

Jōōlmâ dâ mūkh partī oṛhio, namâ samâj banâō,
Ūtthō.

(Turn the face of tyranny, build a new society).

His 'Awarâ' is a romantic with a quest for ideals and with the quest of adventure; the poem is full of wander-thirst which reminds one of the English poem, 'Wander-Thirst.' Only Awara's 'Awârâ' is more wide in its scope; it embraces love and romance, the desire sometimes to stay and stop, but like the endless roads, he must move on, unmindful of loving eyes and red-bangled arms, although on seeing them his steps falter. The descriptions, similes, and rhythm of the words and lines indicate the yearning of 'Awara's' heart and at the same time the insatiable urge for wander. This urge is irresistible, even if 'Awara' wants to rest:

The river banks have been striving to meet, but rivers flow on. I have been blessed to move on, my feet never stop¹.

His other good poems are 'Pañchī', 'Pañchī se' (Bird, and To the Bird), 'Dharamsâla kī yââd'.

1. Magh dhooli Ed. by Pt. Shambu Nath, Pages 45-7)

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Awara's poetry is of a reflective type. It is not always an easy reading. It has got to be read carefully to understand it, for unlike the other Dogri poets, 'Awara' has a distinct style and approach of his own. His Dogri is also sometimes different in construction from the other Dogri poets and sometimes, Kangra influence in the construction of his sentences can also be seen—as in 'Thâukrân dî Mōōrtî 'Apnē gaī pârân', etc. Sometimes the reflective element is so strong that it dominates the musical element in his poetry. But there is a fine blend of the two in his Athrōō.

Awara has seen suffering and pain and there is a continual reference to them in his poetry. Whereas pain fills him with sympathy for others and even with pathos, it does not fill him with self-pity. He has the courage to face suffering even though he is conscious of its impact on him. Sometimes this does make him weak, and he cries out:

Pīr kinnī shamār nīñ hōā

Sārī āyū ch payār nīñ thōā

(Pain is un-ending; all my life I have longed for somebody's love.)

But he accepts suffering as a part of his existence; he treats it as a trophy. He does not give up, nor does he want to lose his self-respect. He is now quite used to pain and misery. It won't be incorrect to say that he drinks deep everyday from the cup of misery.

The result of this is that Awara's outlook has been widened. He has come out of the ivory tower

1. Maghdhoolī, Pages 45-47.

or the palace of art, in which many poets take refuge, to solace their hurt feelings. This aspect of Awara's personality is as much important as it is productive. Suffering has opened the flood-gates of his creative faculty, and saved him from sentimental and romantic outbursts :

Kish Rōndé Gaye Bhâréñ gī, Bhūlle Bisreñ De
Payârêñ gī,

Jindgāñi Jerê nīñ Jī sakde, O Giñdé n Chāññ
târeñ gī.

(Some repine at the pleasures slipped by, others at the old love-affairs. They only think of stars and moon who cannot face the odds of life.)

This is the note of courage and determination. But Awara has to soften the harsh effect of misery on him, which somehow becomes evident in his poetry, and fight the temptation, at times quite strong, to sentimentalise himself or others. who, like him have been beaten by the cruel hand of fate. (See Magh Dhōōlī pages 28—54).

Kehari Singh Madhukar (1929.....). The poet who has been partly responsible for widening the outlook and scope of Dogri poetry in 1950's, Kehari Singh Madhukar was born at Gura Slathian in a well-to-do family of an army officer in 1929. The village was the stronghold of Rajputs, particularly the loyalists, and his father himself was a loyalist. Then, Madhukar was married to the daughter of a well-placed civil officer. Being the only son in the family, Madhukar received extra affection from his parents and relatives. This left a great impact on his moods and temperament. But, in his outlook, there is a

repudiation of the loyalist traditions of his ancestors; as a poet he is a revolutionary.

The decade between 1940 and 1950 can be called the period of patriotism in Dogri poetry. All the poets sang—and in almost similar tones—about the greatness and glory of Dogri, Duggar and the Dogras. There was a threat to Dogri culture from the forces of disruption and sectarianism. Also, the state of Jammu and Kashmir was attacked by Pakistani invaders. People were pre-occupied with their own state; they did not think of India as their country. This was giving rise to narrow nationalism and was acting as a factor in limiting the vision of Dogras. Madhukar came at that time with his famous call;

¹Dēsâ gi Banânâ tē mītânâ tūndê hath ai

(You can make or mar the country).

This was an eye-opener. Insetead of keeping themselves shut in their narrow world, they had to break those shells. The country was to be saved and reconstructed as a whole. The heroes of the country like Purū, Prithviraj, Mir Qasim, Shivaji etc. were lauded; the treacherous rulers like Raja Ambi, Jai Chand and Mir Jaafar were condemned. Communalism, like a canker, was eating into the vitals of the country; to build up the country it must be fought and annihilated.

The impact of such a poem was obvious. It had a signal success in drawing the people and the poets from their Duggar to the whole of the country. After that other poets also started writing such poems,

1. Madhukan.

and they went even a step farther. The world was one whole and the workers were all to be united. Dinoo, Deep and Yash Sharma expressed their solidarity with the movement for world peace and prosperity. Deep's famous poem 'Kal hā mein kalā, mére sāthī niñ ganōn ajj' Dinoo's 'yā iddar hō yā udhar hō' and Yash's "amnī dī lōṛ hāī" owe not a little to this new outlook.

Madhukar's poems were first published as "Namī Minijrān"—collection of new trends in Dogri poetry. Not that Madhukar made a complete departure. On the other hand, Madhukar was deeply-rooted in the old soil and carried forward the old traditions. And the reason for Madhukar's greatness is that standing on the old soil, he enlarged its scope, made it maturer and performed new experiments. Apnā Dés (My Country), Namēñ Gēēt (New Songs), Namī Chetnā (New Consciousness) are a proof of that. He is treading on the path as shown by Hardutt, Dinoo Bhai, Samailpuri, Shastri and "Deep", but he left for new pastures as is clear from his "Amnī" (Peace) and Namā Itihās (New History). It is not without its significance that the titles of quite a good number of his poems have "Namī or Namā (New), symbolising a new spirit which had come into Dogri literature. Madhukar has added a new import to the word "Namā".

In yet an indirect way, Madhukar was responsible for introducing ghazal in Dogri literature. Before 1953, politically there was uncertainty and politics in the present-day world has influenced every walk of life. Artists and poets are first to be influenced but they were hesitant to express their feelings in a direct and

out-spoken manner. There was another aspect: the relations between Madhukar, and his group of friends were not as happy as they used to be. Ghazal was the medium through which they could voice their political aspirations and personal feelings. Ghazal is a form in Persian and Urdu poetry which has been handled to describe the feelings of love and despair, romance and escape and in which every verse is independent of the other. Outwardly it gives the impression of disconnected verses, but essentially it is an integrated whole. Why not express their feelings through ghazal? The experiment was done and though Madhukar did not write very successful ghazals, the form of ghazal was introduced in Dogri literature in which Shastri, Ved Rahi, Deep and others contributed. Kishen Samailpuri had done independent experiments in Dogri ghazal, for he already had written a good number of them in Urdu. Deep's ghazals combined the political and the personal feelings, without letting them degenerate into either propaganda—slogans or personal despair or ecstasy.

Madhukar combines imagination, experience and feelings in his poetry. He is in touch with the new trends in the literatures of other Indian languages, and has quite successfully combined those trends in Dogri poetry. Charkhâ (Spinning-wheel), shows that Madhukar has grace, ideas and feelings to express the life of a Dogra woman—a widow—through her relationship with her spinning-wheel. The poet seems to have been moved by Ram Nath Shastri's Chakkī, but where—as Shastri's poem is more thoughtful and reflective, Madhukar's is the more sensitive of the two. There is

a melancholy which pervades it, but there is no despair for the widow has the courage to face all her misfortunes courageously, just as she accepted all her joys smilingly. The familiar domestic problems are handled with sympathy and understanding.

The domestic touch is obvious in his *Dōli* (Palanquin) as well. A growing girl is like the growing crops, and her mind is filled both with longings and misgivings for the unseen and new world. The condition of the parents is like that of the farmer, but the irony is that the crops do not remain in their houses but are taken away by the outsiders when they are fully ripe. The condition of a growing girl is similar to that of the rising crops; and there is a veiled reference to the feudalistic set-up when the jagirdars took away the produce of the soil without any toil whatsoever. And is not marriage of the present type a feudalistic institution? But there are wistful longings as well as a romance for the unseen, though not of unheard, things. Why has a daughter to leave her family, her hearth and home for the outside world and adopt something unknown as her own? There is a duality of situation giving rise to the duality of mind, of feelings mixed with hope and fear. The palanquin-bearers should, therefore, be extra cautious in their steps. There is a delicacy, a sensitivity of feelings, conveyed in a sensitive style.

Madhukar has taken commonplace topics but by his vision he has invested them with a new life. He knows the times are fast changing; the days of exploitation are fast coming to an end. Even the slight but united effort of the workers will be

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sufficient to change this system based on exploitation and misery of the people. Madhukar is a progressive, for having been a member of the privileged society himself at one stage, but possessing a sensitive heart, he has seen the exploitation of many by few; this needs must go. The bulk of mankind are like the oxen who are yoked, with their eyes covered with cloth, so that they do not see anything nor discriminate between things but go on toiling and serving endlessly. And who gains by their toil? The exploiters. Why should human beings be forever like the yoked animals? Through the symbols of the yoke, the oxen and the person operating on them, the poet cleverly shows the workers and peasants as the yoked oxen and the exploiters as those who live on the toil of the oxen. But men are endowed with commonsense and intelligence. They should understand it better; why not get together and give a last jolt. Rōōp Jūgā dā badlā kardā ēkkē paltā khânā, palēn khīnēn dī gall chharī hōōn, bind k jōr gāi lānā,¹ The times are changing now, only one jolt is enough. It is a matter of few hours and moments; only a small effort is required.) Madhukar, as pointed out earlier, starts with ordinary images but gives them a new twist, and transforms them by his new vision of changed mankind.

Madhukar has not got all those privileges which his ancestors enjoyed and which are enjoyed even to-day by a selected few. He is not jealous of them, but he is a commoner. He, therefore, makes a common cause with all the peoples and feels that they are like brothers, as he says in his *Grēbi*" (Poverty); Mane dī Védnā, Raste dā

1 See Nami Minjrān

pran' Nor can he forget that the exploiters and imperialists have framed a history which suits their interests, and ignores the real builders of society, the members of humanity who sacrificed their lives for defending the integrity of their countries; of women who lost their husbands, of children who became orphans; it mentions only a few who were the real oppressors and aggressors.

Madhukar feels that the cosmic universe—the forces of nature—is against mankind. So many wrongs have been done and borne in this world, but heavens are silent spectators to all this. (Ambar Kharōta chūp chap dikhdā.)¹ On the other hand, nature (gâas) has always tried to thwart the aims and aspirations of humanity (Manukhta, page 20, Madhukan by Dinoo Bhai Pant). In this respect, Madhukar reminds one of Hardy, but unlike Hardy, Madhukar is not a pessimist; his vision is not darkened by the hostile cosmic forces. He rather accepts their challenge to humanity, for humanity and its foreces can never be shattered and all its stories are immortal (page 20, Madhukan). As such good times are coming when new history will be written, not of a few despots of exploiters, but of mankind as a whole, of the toiling masses and suffering humanity, achieving their victory through their mastery over pain and suffering, (Namâ Irihâs, page 26, Madhukan) by virtue of their hard work in the fields and mines and factories. And when man overcomes hostile forces and masters those of nature, a new universal order will be created in which moon, stars, earth and sky seem to be a symphony of music—'Chan, Târe, Dharat, Samâân ekk gēet āi'.¹

I. Madhukan, a Cultural Academy publication.

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Such is Madhukar and his poetry. Who can say Dogri poets lag behind other poets in their expression of new, challenging ideas and those too in a forceful style? Madhukar has brought Dogri poetry in line with the poetry in other languages. And yet Madhukar's language—the idiom and style of which are influenced by Hindi and Urdu techniques—needs greater vitality and native colour. Sometimes his ideas take the better of his language, and thus cause a setback to his medium of expression. Madhukar is now paying attention to artistic restraint, to control his exuberant emotions and not to say in great length what can be said briefly. Madhukar has made a remarkable improvement in the short span of his poetic career. He has written some free verses and one musical feature (or rather an opretta) based on different songs of the seasons. However, there is no need for him to rest over his laurels. The paths of poetic creation are not straight nor are they easy, but Madhukar is :

Tūh shāhīn hāī parvāz hāī kâām terā, terē sāmne
âsmân aūr bhī hāī.

Shyam Dutt 'Prag' (1929....). Shri Shyam Dutt 'Prag' is working in the Radio Kashmir, Jammu. Essentially a Hindi poet, he could not remain unaffected by the infectious zeal of Dogri writers. His themes are patriotism and love, and he embellishes his poetry by employing the ornamental devices of Hindi poetry—the use of 'Kabit,' 'Chhand' and 'Saviya' metres in his Dogri poems. He writes sometimes poetical features on Festivals and has tried to popularise the Hindi metres in Dogri poetry.

Ved Pal 'Deep' (1929.....). Deep is one of the

intelligent poets of Dogri. Born in the well-known family of Dharmats, Deep holds a Master's degree in Hindi. He is widely read in Urdu and English, and therefore, in his writings he makes references which are familiar to the readers of Hindi, Urdu and English. Deep started his poetic career with lyrics in Hindi and one of his longer lyrics Shalyâ won as much applause as it created hostility among the social die-hards. It is one of the most controversial poems 'Deep' has ever written, but in it one finds most of the qualities which are present in his poetry. It has melody, sweetness, easy flow and sensuous beauty, but it never degenerates into crude sensuality. Based on 'Deep's early romance, it portrays all the pangs, all the joy and romance, which 'Deep' felt at that time. One never knows how far this love was a reciprocated feeling, but this helped 'Deep' in ripening and maturing his genius as a poet. Later on, 'Deep' translated the same poem in Dogri. It is surprising indeed to see how 'Deep' has re-captured much of its original charm and beauty. 'Deep' wrote many beautiful lyrics in Hindi, short-stories and one-act plays which made him famous in Jammu.

It was in July, 1948, that 'Deep', along with other members of Students' Union went round the interior of Jammu province. It was not till that moment that 'Deep' realised how much he loved his homeland—Duggar—and its people, who are famous for their simplicity, frankness and hospitable nature, Wasn't it his duty to do something for them, to write for them? he asked him-self, and he did his duty by writing a poem in praise of the Dogras and their land. 'What should one say about the Dogras? They

live in amity with all. Even if somebody strews thorns in their path, they greet him with garlands'.¹ The description of the Duggar like a flowerbed of Jasmines in the garden is charming on account of its simplicity. It has been clearly inspired by Ram Dhan's famous 'Hasnâ, Khédnâ' in so far as its metre is concerned. This poem is not marked for the intricate pattern of imagery which 'Deep' developed in his later poetry.

His 'Bâpū de Saṅghī Kapūr' (Bapu's ignoble Sanghi sons), is a severe indictment of the creed and functions of the R. S. S. It is not rich in rhythmical qualities or verbal beauty but it does have the biting force. It cannot, however, be treated as a great poem though it is quite important in the formation of Deep's genius as a controversial poet, when he is writing about political subjects.

'Deep' is a politician and he belongs to the left of the road. He feels real freedom is not come yet, and therefore, he thinks that the battle between the bourgeoisie and the workers is going on, although in his earlier poem 'Namī Azâdī (New Freedom)', he exhorts the Goddess of Liberty to visit the huts of the poor and the down-trodden. Later on, in his 'Kal hâ mein Kallâ, mere sâthī nīn ganōn ajj'² (yesterday I was all alone; today my comrades are countless). The poem weaves a beautiful pattern and the words and similes evolve an imagery which is

1 Jāgo Duggar.

2 See Madhukān for Deep's Poems, Ed.
by Sh. Dinoo Bhai Pant,

rich in thought-content and poetic qualities. Like the innumerable waves of the sea, the infinite number of stars, countless leaves and sands, his comrades are numberless. It is a revolutionary poem, challenging in its tone and content. 'Deep' has included, very deftly, references to the geography of the State and Punjab; the force of the masses is like the force of the swelling Ūjh river, before which the walls of straw (the weak policy of his opponents) must crumble.

But 'Deep' is not all politics. The day-to-day problems, the hurry and flurry of life, sometimes not unmixed with sad and painful experiences, is also mirrored in his poetry. *Badlī Gaē Dūniyā Yā Badlī Gāī Akh'* '(Either this world is changed or I am)', contains minute observation and is full of the concrete images; it is full of those minor points which have a cumulative effect of a big whole. It has undertones of pathos. The poem portrays the mind of a young girl who vaguely re-captures the fleeting shadows of the past. The restlessness of her soul—because she cannot analyse her adolescent feelings and is not loved by any one nor does she love anyone, and hence the contrast between this teasing adolescence and happy-go-lucky childhood—is conveyed with a sensitivity and understanding.

Sometimes the note of frustration creeps in his poetry. 'Deep' is untiring; his zeal and enthusiasm are unbounded. And yet the conditions—hard realities—are at times too much for him. He remains no

longer certain of himself, of his goal. This is clear from his *Badlā Neiñ Sijjī Dī Sañjāñ*¹ (Rain-drenched evening). Whereas his grasp grows weak over circumstances, it seldom does on his theme and its treatment.

In such a state of mind one turns to some object, some person to hold fast to. 'Deep' needed somebody's love and love is a many-splendored thing. He met Padma, a young girl-poet. There were fluctuations in their relationship: sometimes there was hope and ecstasy, at others disappointment and discouragement, but love, nevertheless, grew stronger. These feelings are expressed in Deep's famous ghazal, *Mere Mane Ch Payār Iyiāñ Gāi Jiyāñ K hā*² (In my heart there is the same old love for you, the same old feelings are strong as ever).

One of the peculiar achievements - and the reason for Deep's greatness—is that Deep has successfully employed Ghazal as a medium not only to express his personal feelings but to voice, in an objective way, the feelings of humanity. Ghazal has been imported into Dogri literature from Urdu; its every couplet is independent of the others, and therefore, whereas it requires great art and skill to express self-contained ideas in those couplets, very few poets have used Ghazal as a medium to express the present-day problems, applying it to suit the modern political conditions and controversies. To do

1 *Madhūkan*, Ed. by Dinoo Pant

2 *Ibid*, Ghazal 2

this is an added proof of a writer's skill. Faiz Ahmed Faiz and few others are such examples. In Dogri, 'Deep' has tried to do that and has succeeded to a very great measure. His Ghazal No. 1 (Madhūkan, page 48) is case in point:

'Mañzil Katâin āi kūs pāsāi,

Hallā namā āi kūs pāsāi,

Ai gali nīn ke kūn Jitag,

Dīkhō Ke Nāiyān āi kūt pāsai,

(Does it matter who wins? Just see who has justice on his side.)

Deep, as said earlier, is a leftist in politics, and though he knows there is not much hope for his cause to triumph in the immediate future, yet, he feels, justice is on his side. This glancing forth, forward and backward, and making every couplet move to express different shades of meaning and yet maintaining a continuity in them all, is an achievement indeed. In Ghazal No. 3 (page 50 of Madhūkan), 'Deep' refers to his idealism, his hope for a new order. 'If there were no hope that we would reach our destination some day, imagine, what would have been our state of mind in such long, arduous journeys?' The worldly meaning is on the surface, but deep below it is the real purport of what he aims to say. He refuses to be daunted by the heavy odds or by endless years of struggle. 'What is an individual's life to change the tides of time? What to speak of moments and hours, even months and years are an insignificant period'.¹ Ghazal Nos. 5 and 6 also deal with the same ideas in an elaborate fashion. How

1 Madhūkan, a Cultural Academy Publication, 1959

many times does 'Deep' remind one of the great ghazal-writers of Urdu? One idea of new order, of revolution runs through them and it moulds all ghazals accordingly. For, like sonnet, ghazal is distinguished by its idea, and not its form; and though the form remains the same, the idea varies.

But 'Deep' can be very intimate even in his most impersonal and objective ghazals. This lends peculiar charm to his poetry. In ghazal No. 4,¹ the references to friends are quite intimate, for in them he finds nothing if it is not the wealth of love and affection. There are others, of course, who have tried to discourage him from treading the path which he thinks is right. The pattern is rather complicated. From friends his idea moves on to his country, and this blend of the personal and the impersonal is handled with ability. And it is alone by submerging the personal into the impersonal that real success in poetry is achieved. 'By breaking all the chains of mental slavery (in this case love of friends and desire of beautiful dreams), we started on our voyage, although sometimes the sweet dreams created by hope seemed to be backoning us on to them.'²

Ghazal Nos. 2 and 8 are also full of intimate touches—their simplicity, directness and the maturity of ideas are remarkable.

'Deep' lives in the atmosphere of cities and, therefore, his language is that of the cities. His ideas are complex and mature and therefore, his language is that which suits his ideas. It hasn't the colloquial expression of Dinoo Bhai Pant or Tara Samailpuri.

1. Madhukhan 2. Ibid

Nor is there the verbal melody of Shambu Nath or Madhukar. At times, 'Deep' is nearer R. N. Shastri than anyone else. His poetry needs must be read, and read carefully to be understood and enjoyed. More often, the thought-content is predominant over other feelings, and his style of expressing his ideas is literary.

Deep has tried to keep politics aloof from his poetry, but there are occasions when his poetry becomes loaded with politics. He has written, of late, some very good ghazals and 'qittâs' on the model of Urdu poetry, and 'Swaiiyâs' and 'ghanakshari' in the style of Hindi poetry. The ghanakshris have a melody, a charm of alliteration and assonance, of word and sound-pictures which are new to Deep's poetry. But 'Deep' has yet to improve further his command over Dogri vocabulary and its idiom, for sometimes the ideas become indistinct on account of his incomplete grasp over Dogri. However, his poem written on Lumumba's death shows the growing skill of 'Deep' in handling Dogri language; and the powerful theme, revolutionary fervour and intricate imagery make his poem on Congo a true masterpiece in Dogri poetry.

Shri Param Chand Premi (1929 ..). Shri Param Chand Premi is from Udhampur District. At present he is working as a petition-writer in Udhampur Court.

Shri Premi has written some good poems depicting the various problems of the rural areas of Duggar. He has also written some good patriotic poems, and has tried his skill at writing plays and prose-pieces.

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Shri Kishnu Pant (1930...), Shri 'Pant' was born at Sooiyan in Samba Tehsil of Jammu District, and at present, he is working as a religious teacher in the Indian Army.

He has written some good poems based on Hindu Mythology and in praise of his motherland. Sometimes he writes also poems about common people and their problems

Krishan Datt Padha (1931...) Krishan Datt is at present working at the Jammu Radio Station, and takes active part in the programmes for villagers and in comic programmes. He is a good actor and he writes Dogri poetry which has a fair degree of comic element in it. But it is not an undiluted comedy; it has undertones of seriousness and pathos. Sometimes his humour becomes too grim and borders on cynicism.

Krishan Datt is a progressive writer. He has a definite conception of new order of things, and he sings eloquently when he thinks of that age which is yet to come. When he looks at the present-day world, where in spite of a change in rulers, there is not much change in the real conditions of the poor and the down-trodden, then his pen assumes a pungency which is all the more impressive because it comes so suddenly and unexpectedly.

Krishan Datt belongs to a middle class family and he, therefore, understands the problems of middle class people—their hopes and aspirations, their failures and disappointments; their vacillating nature; and he expresses them all with a charm and force which are peculiarly his own. He is also very fond of similes

and comparisons which are quite unusual. What he lacks in the qualities of metre and rhythm are compensated for by his forceful style, colloquial expression and robust humour. There is a satirical vein in Krishan Datt's poetry but it is saved from becoming cynical by his compassionate and sympathetic nature. He has also experimented in the style of Urdu Ghazals and Rubaiyat, although they are not so successful in so far as their artistic and technical aspects are concerned. Most of his poems are of topical interest. Krishan Datt has also penned a few stories in Dogri.

Mohan Lal Spolia (1932.....), Mohan Lal Spolia is one of the most promising poets of Dogri. Born in Samba, 24 miles from Jammu, in a lower-middle class family, Spolia could not succeed in getting education. He used to listen to the Dogri poets in the poetic symposia which were arranged at Samba on different occasions. At the same time, he developed sympathies for the Praja Parishad. This inspired him to pen down his own thoughts in verse. He experimented with couplets and quatrains, and then with complete poems. Living as he did at Samba where Dogri is spoken in its native vigour, the example of such poets as Ram Nath Shastri, Kishan Samailpuri, Dinoo Bhai Pant and Madhukar goaded him also to write for himself and his people in a language which came naturally to him, and which the natives could understand without much education. His early poems, though lacking in imaginative qualities, possessed fiery spirit and an agitational mood. In later poems, Spolia has exercised control over his feelings.

Spolia's poetry runs into two streams : One, which

contains his inmost ideas and sentiments, and the other which concerns the problems of the people. In the first is seen the imaginative quality of his poetry, and in the second his devotion towards the common-folk. At times, these two streams merge into one. Fâqâ (Hunger) is one such example. It is the poem which made the lovers of literature realise the poetic qualities of Spolia's verse. There is a blend of imagination and hard reality. How hunger works on the over-wrought nerves, and how everything seems 'food-dyed' is conveyed in a clever way. There is pain, but there are irony and wit as well. The description of snow as the bowl of rice may appear exaggerated, but it powerfully captures the state of mind which, on account of the conditions of near-starvation, results in 'seeing' things which the empty stomach needs. And the humorous situations only heighten the despair of a hungry man. The utter simplicity of the narrative is not a lack of art; an apparent artlessness is contrived. The jerky rhythm creates the picture of a man whose steps are unsteady because he is feeling groggy. The language is simple and the style, though consisting of overstatements, suits the occasion.

Maūt te Jawânī (Death and Youth), and Aâūn būddâ tū mast jawânī (Old age and exuberant youth) show Spolia's habit of mind which consciously aims at showing anti-thesis which is in life, and in its different situations. The poet conjures up various images which prove the contrast between the two extremes, between death and life, between youth and old age. Life is the name of light, of joy and happi-

ness, of creative faculty; death represents darkness, misery and misfortune and the annihilating force. And still death is not the destroyer of everything; life is yet triumphant over the forces of destruction, for order comes out of chaos. Spolia reinforces his arguments in *Maūt te Jawānī* from myth, legend and history, to prove that the sun of life has always pierced through the night of death, and, therefore, life shall continue in all its romance and love, charm and beauty. Abhimanyu, Rani of Jhansi, Heer and Ranjha, who defied the forces of death, have established the immortality of life.

The poem voices the convictions of Spolia, but it lacks the intensity of a coherent organism. Spolia scatters his ideas on the canvas without being fully able to integrate them into a well-knit pattern. The poem seems a play of colours and designs without a proper blend of them all.

Āauñ Būddā Tū Mast Jawānī shows the contradiction between old age and youth. Youth has always been engulfed in old age, but old age has never been content with its lot; it has always been filled with a longing for the past, for the times which are gone now but which once were constituting the rainbow-coloured days of youth. This anti-thesis between youth and age, though it lends sharpness and irony to the situation, lends it a poignancy also. Life seeks pleasures and joys and they can be had only in youth, old age is like the withered flower, the decaying leaves. It is the beginning of the end of all that was so attractive in youth. In fact, youth is synonymous with attraction, with pleasure. The

imagery of flowers, of dancing and chirping birds fits into the description of youth; the sere leaves, the setting moon, the dim column of smoke indicate the down-ward trend of life. The undulating rhythm conveys the double-mood of joy and depression, happiness and sorrow.

Spolia created a sensation by printing a Eulogy on the death of late Maharaja Hari Singh. It shocked the progressives as much as it delighted the political die-hards. The virulence of feelings and the torrential flow of its metre were astounding, but the vituperative tone and the scurrilous attacks launched by him on national leadership exhibited Spolia's immature mind who had no capacity to see the political happenings in their proper perspective. Moreover, it was in bad taste to use the name of the late Maharaja for a cause which had nothing edifying in it; it was the propagandist in Spolia which was out to win a cheap fame for himself. For, neither the late Maharaja represented communalism or sectionalism, nor his regime was flawless. Equally undesirable were Spolia's attacks on the leadership of Nehru and others.

And Spolia soon realised this. He printed yet another long poem, this time strongly indicting the oppressors, masquerading in the form of so-called well-wishers of the poor and the down-trodden. This poem seems to have been inspired by a poem written by Dinoo Bhai Pant some fifteen years ago: *Ūth Majōrâ, Jâg Kasânâ, Terâ bellâ Āyâ hī'*. Only Dinoo was more cogent and sound in his writing and more mature in his appreciation of the political movement; Spolia only represented the fight of a section against the present leaders,

1. Jâga Duggar

both genuine and not so genuine.

But Spolia has been fast improving. The unrestrained nature exhibits itself but rarely, although the metre and other technical details have not been mastered yet. The love-lyrics sometimes betray an unpolished taste; and the demagogic touch can be seen in some of his other poems. Spolia, however, is a sedulous writer: he does not mind the lapses and is always writing something. His style has improved; there is a native strength in his diction. Spolia should, however, curb his instinct to roll into sentiments, and organise his ideas and plan his material, which contains the ingredients of a high poetic quality. His poetry will then no longer look like a few broken, though beautiful, fragments but appear a fusion of them all into one organic whole.

Shri Dwarka Nath Mangi (1933—). Shri Dwarka Nath Mangi is at present working in Shri Ranbir Govt. Press, Jammu. He has written some good poems, although none of them has been published so far.

Randhir Singh (1939). Of the young poets who are emerging on Dogri scene, Randhir Singh, at one stage, was one of the best. The reflective mood and the intricacy of his style belied his years. Randhir Singh left off his college studies without getting his Bachelor's degree, for his fancy, which was more inclined to wander in the land of romance and pastures of abstract thought, did not allow him to be engrossed in the laboratories to experiment about atomic theories and speed of light. Left to itself, his fancy soars the heights which the old timers may intend but dare not try.

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This 'audacity' of Randhir's fancy is the chief quality which lends an individuality to Randhir's poetry and its expression. He is thoroughly read in the Dogri poets, has been influenced by Madhukar in his reflective poetry; in the matter of style and metre, he is very well-versed in Urdu literature and, to some degree, with English literature. There is, therefore, no dearth of ideas in him. As a matter of fact, there is a glut, but his vision is not fully matured yet, and his grasp over his medium of expression, language and metre, is not very steady. The result is that one is dazzled by the fineness of his ideas, by the flights of his imagination, though feeling it all the time that Randhir has not fully succeeded in evolving a vehicle for them. The similes and metaphors, word-pictures—in fact, the whole imagery—show the imaginative grasp, but his technical skill is not adequate to the task. It is, as if Randhir has a box of sweet colours and fresh ideas but the colours and the ideas lie 'uncompacted'. There is no proper cohesion and coherence; the correct colour scheme is lacking. It is this quality of his style which leaves the reader thinking. This is as much a tribute as it is a criticism of Randhir's style. Paṇḍāreṅ dā Ghar clearly proves this assertion. Randhir's imaginative flights are remarkable, but he cannot weave all his ideas into a proper design. His reflections over life, over the common points between life and the working of the 'paṇḍars' (a type of insects), shows an innate richness of Randhir's mind but, at the same time, one notices the lack of control over details. The imagery is very involved and at times one is surprised by its artistic quality.

And still one is filled with some vague sense of inadequacy.

It is this exuberance of ideas without a suitable equipment to convey them through a proper medium that Randhir has to be very careful about. His latest effort, though still not complete, only heightens the importance of evolving a suitable medium and a greater grasp over Dogri. Khalil Gibran is a very difficult poet, and to translate him into any language is an arduous job, more so when his 'Prophet' is concerned. Dogri is yet without a proper vocabulary to convey the reflective moods and the recondite ideas of Khalil or such-like poets. The very fact that Randhir has embarked upon such a perilous course speaks of his courage and determination. Temperamentally also, Randhir is suited for the job, but how much can he accomplish of this difficult task at such an unripe age, and in the absence of such a tradition in Dogri poetry, only time will show. We can only wait and watch with the hope that Randhir will be strict enough to curb any instinct to be recondite for the sake of vagueness only, and exercise full control over the preponderance of ideas which cannot be expressed without straining his poetic medium to the breaking point.

For some time past, Randhir has joined the Indian Air Force as Flight Lieutenant, but we hope that if he has started his flights over the machine-wings, he has not altogether stopped flying on the 'viewless wings of Poesy.'

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Padma Sharma (1940...). Padma 'Deep' or Padma Sharma as she is known now, is the only woman-poet of Dogri. And she is famous not because she is the only woman-poet in Dogri—though this is partly the reason—but because in her poetry one finds glimpses of one's adolescent feelings, of peculiar pains and painful pleasures, of rainbow-coloured love and the utter disappointments and frustrations of life which she has had in an abundant measure. Above all, one finds in her poems a simplicity which at times is fascinating on account of its child-like quality, a mixture of inquisitiveness and directness, a delicacy and maidenly charm which make their reading a heart-warming experience. It is this quality of her heart-warming material which needs to be emphasised, for where her poetry appears lacking in thought-content or in its ability to convey a rounded picture, or even when her poetry shows deficiency in the matter of rhythm and metre, it is the warmth of her feelings (which she communicates in her poetry), which one carries with oneself long after her other qualities are dimmed.

Born in a middle class family of Brahmins, Padma is the daughter of Pt. Jai Dev Sharma, M. A., who was a great scholar of Sanskrit. Reading came to her through her father and so did her initial misfortunes. Her father, who was a Lecturer in Sanskrit at Mirpur, was killed during Pakistani raid in 1947. Sensitive as she is, and as she loved her father, his death made her turn into herself. She became more introvert, a brooding sort of a creature. Weak health made things more difficult. In such circumstances of near-poverty, conditions of domestic unhappiness, one turns to some-

thing for escape Padma was in her teens and she was in love with love. Endowed with a poetic mind, a keen observant nature and thoughtful bent of mind, her poetic genius blossomed in such conditions. And from love with love she fell in love with a bird of her own kind, and they were united to each other in July, 1957.

But this is not how her first poem was written. Once she was sitting at her place and a beggar-woman, who was probably deranged, asked her, 'Būā (an address to some elderly woman)! Are these palatial buildings yours?' The question was puzzling, but this set in Padma a train of thoughts and she wrote the poem, *Râjē Dīyāñ Mañdiāñ*, which still is, in many respects, her masterpiece. The poem is marked for incisive style with a live language and a penetrating vision. One glimpses in this poem the rebel which is in Padma. She challenges all the institutions of decaying feudalism which were responsible for cruelty and oppression over the innocent people. The rhythm, which sometimes becomes fast-moving and sometimes halting, and the conversational style, the questions wherein lie the pathetic answers, vividly portray the mind of a deranged person. It is amazing how at such an early age Padma achieved such a brevity of expression but, at the same time, loaded with so much intensity and meaning. There is pathos, there is deep tragedy and authenticity, but there is no sentimentalisation. And herein lies the main cause of the success of this poem. The poem moves forward and back, and working on the process of associations, it captures the twilight of the beggar-woman's life. There is no proper coherence at times,

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if one looks superficially at it, but there is a method about it, for this is how the mind works, particularly of a deranged person. Things do not come to mind just in a sequence, one after the other, and hence there is in the beggar-woman a condemnation of cruelties as well as the yearning and love for her husband who is (or was?) in the prison. The poem is revolutionary in so-far-as it challenges the hollowness of glamour and the palatial buildings; the red bricks symbolise the blood of the labourers, and the lamps appear to be consuming blood as oil. The family instinct is sharp in the poem: the yearning for her husband and pity for her children, and indignation which is inherent because the splendour and glory are based on the misery of the poor workers. The detachment—the poem describes the old beggar-woman who is deranged, asking questions with all the seriousness, for she seems not to doubt the genuineness of what she is saying—is very impressive; it affects us because this detachment does not allow the theme and its treatment to be sentimentalised.

This one poem would have marked a place for Padma in Dogri poetry but she has written many more. In her *Ichhyâ* (Desire), the adloscent feelings are strong, but there is in Padma a combination of strength and weakness, of compromise and defiance; for whereas she is prepared to touch the sky in her swing and pluck the stars which seem to be teasing her, there is an exhibition of an over-obsessed mind, a mind full of love for the sake of love. She does not know her object of love thoroughly but she knows she loves him.

The poem traverses many vistas—of defiance, and despair, of wonderment and love. The references to her imaginary love are deeply-moving. In the second stanza, however, the grasp seems to become weak but she recovers it in the next stanza. If one looks more closely, one finds veiled reference to that heightened state of mind wherein the torn mantle or head-covering seems to have been torn by her imaginary lover¹.

Padma, as said earlier, has had more of her share of the cup of miseries than is her due. She has seen misery and the torture of love which is more painful than other physical or mental torment. In the matter of love, Padma has been a precocious poet. In her *Vijōg* (Separation), and *Chambe dī Dâliâ*², we see the pains of separation; the lines that while remembering her beloved, if some one disturbs her in her thought, she feels like hating him, remind us of the famous English poem "Symptoms of Love." Padma refers to God by remembering whom one's miseries are forgotten, but she won't be happy, for she wants to remember her love alone. "What is the use of remembering that God if I forget you, my dear?" For her, paradise lies in his memory; the other paradise is imaginary. The intensity of feelings is startling; the metre of the poem seems to be influenced by the style of Ram Nath Shastri.

Dō pakhrōō (Two birds) is an allegorical story of

1 See *Madhukān*, Ed. by Dinoo Pant,
a Cultural Academy Publication.

Ibid

two young lovers who are forced by the cruel hands of society to live apart from each other. They only unite in death, or do they? Here again the influence of R. N. Shastri is visible, but it lacks that spontaneity which is Padma's speciality.

Mâū dī Pacchân is a graphic picture of the feelings of a child for its mother and vice versa. It is a familiar picture of any house with children; in this poem it is Padma's own house, with her younger brother and her mother. The intimacy of style and description is the added quality of the poem; the scene is authentic.

Her song about Nikṛe fūṅṛōō, ūcchī ūṛâṇ has a true lyrical quality. It has intensity, directness and the references to the domestic scene which are at times touching. There is a nostalgic narration of the joys before marriage and the reviles of the mother-in-law and sister-in-law (the two persons about whom Dattu's lines are famous). If only they knew how the girls felt after leaving homes of their parents where they had no worries!

Sometimes Padma sentimentalises. Chambe dī dāliyâ is a fine lyric, particularly the line "My dear friend, I am angry because my beloved left for another place without even telling me anything about his departure"; but the accent is on sentimentalisation. Sometimes there is a tendency towards self-pity. The reason is not far to seek. Padma has had a poor health. For two years she was in the hospital in Srinagar fighting a grim battle for life. Some personal worries and some domestic circumstances had upset her. Her object of love, Deep, appeared to be callous at

times. In such conditions, frustration was bound to come. And her poems have two main themes: (i) the voicing of her deep despair which resembles the despair of Tara Pandey of Hindi, and, (ii) her great love for Deep, her only solace in life, although she has suffered quite a good deal in love. Many times, while reading her poems, one is reminded of the poems of Christina Rossetti and Elizabeth Browning.

Padma is courageous; she has fought nobly against chest disease and recovered. Dogri is lucky, but this disease has made Padma more melancholy than ever she was. This brooding melancholy is the enemy of all healthy values of life, of the healthy trends in her poetry. There is a need for curing this gloom. The shortcomings of her style and language and the temptation to sentimentalise are to be overcome, but the need to cure this frustration, the instinct for self-pity, comes first. Padma has seen much of life, of its dark side, but much of life is yet to be seen, and much of its bright aspect. She has to accept this challenge of life and she has to face it boldly and confidently. Once again we hope she will dare.....Already there is a remarkable recovery to be noticed. Her grasp over her theme and details is more mature and firm; she is making up for the deficiencies of metre, and though her approach is still sentimental, there is a definite improvement in her effort to be more restrained. Her poem about the uses of Khadi, and her 'Kashmîr dâ Rastâ' show a new Padma who's more thoughtful and less sentimental than before. Sometimes, of course, her ideas are vague and unclear, and her expression is too inadequate to

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make her allusious intelligible to readers or listeners. But these, one hopes, will disappear as Padma grows maturer in age.

Charan Singh (1941 ..). Kavi Sammelans, the publication of the collections of Dogri poems and the college magazines have helped in producing a crop of young but talented writers of poetry and prose. Madhev Singh has written some good prose pieces, and Randhir Singh, Charan Singh, Prem Sharma and Satya Shama have written poetry. All of them started writing in Dogri during their college days.

Charan Singh has an individuality of approach, style and expression. He has written love-lyrics and ghazlas which bear the impress of the author's personality. There are not many love-lyrics in the modern Dogri literature, and to those which Charan Singh has written, he has brought a freshness and spontaneity. Not that they are first-rate in so far as their technical quality is concerned. On the other hand, the deficiencies of metre and rhythm act against the graceful style and personal, intimate touches. This intimacy of detail, expressed in an exuberant spirit, makes the poems look naive. It is because Charan Singh is an adolescent; and sometimes his grasp over his medium weakens. But this technical shortcoming is compensated for by the vivacity of his theme and approach. There are occasions when Charan Singh becomes too self-conscious; but when he is not, he handles his subject with skill, and understanding.

'Mere Gēeten de bōl na oōnde Gītte', (My songs are for thee, my dear.), Melâ (Festival), and Ghazal, 'Mate Hīrkhe dī shōl bī kit lekhe' show

the improving standard of Charan Singh's poems. In them, he exhibits a delicacy of feeling, sensitivity of mind and narrative skill (in *Melâ*) which are not to be seen in his earlier poetry. His *Melâ* reminds one of Yash's *Melâ*—Yash's poem is incomplete, but Charan Singh's poem is complete in thought and its execution. The imagery is simple and the narration is direct, though his poem is without the finer qualities of Yash's *Melâ*.

Charan Singh has written a good number of poems in which he refers to himself. There is a naivety which is amusing but sometimes it appears as self-pity. Charan Singh has started his poetic career recently and he has attracted the notice of other Dogri poets and readers, but his references to himself, which are sometimes ironic and amusing, appear to be full of self-pity.

Charan Singh has, however, been making steady progress. He is gaining in maturity and expression. *Būkhâ Rōōh* (Hungry soul) depicts the contradictions facing an artist: should art be for art's sake, or should it be for the sake of life? Poet's fancy wants to roam in the luxuries of flowers, but the poet's mind directs him to feel the hunger and misery of the suffering humanity. How can he write about flowers and bees when he has no employment to support himself? And then suddenly, he strikes altogether a different note: whatever be, none should feel that the soul of the poet is hungry.

The development of thought is more consistent and cogent in '*Būkhâ Rōōh*' than in any other of Charan Singh's poems, but the transition to the idea—

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of not making others feel that the soul of the poet is hungry—is sudden. Moreover, the imagery, though at times it conveys the poet's ideas, is not completely adequate, and the argument is involved. It is surprising how at such an age Charan Singh can utilise so effectively the resources of language to write a reflective poem, even though colloquial expressions do not always suit a reflective theme.

PART

III



PROSE

The reign of Maharaja Ranbir Singh is quite significant from the literary point of view. He himself was a learned man and he respected the learned people. In his days, steps were taken to teach Urdu, Persian, Sanskrit and English; at the same time, Dogri was paid special attention. Almost all the official work was carried out in Dogri, and every government servant was expected to learn Dogri or face a ten percent deduction from his pay. Maharaja Ranbir Singh modernised Dogri script by taking help from Devnagri script. Many books were written and translated into Dogri. Dañdh Vidhī (Penal Code) was translated; the manual about drill was also written. Applications were written and firmans issued in Dogri.

But during Maharaja Pratap Singh's reign, some selfish officials succeeded in relegating Dogri to an inferior position, and not much written work is available in Dogri. With Pt. Hardutt Shastri, a new chapter was opened. Pt. Hardutt was a poet only. But soon Dogri found Bhagwat Prasad Sathe and he started writing in prose. Pehlā Phūll was published in 1947. It was a collection of short-stories. This showed up the richness and vitality of the Dogri prose and the great possibilities and scope of Dogri language. Shri Vishwa Nath Khajuria also wrote short-stories and prose-essays. Prashant also wrote Dogri short-stories, and Khirli Bal is one of his famous stories. Tej Ram Khajuria and Shamlal Sharma worked on the linguistic aspects of Dogri. When the movement for regional languages

grew in other parts of India, Dogri Sanstha and Dogra Mandal were formed to propagate the cause of Dogri. In late 1947, the State was invaded by Pakistani tribesmen and other raiders and there was a need to fight this invasion. There was a need for literature which could rouse the feelings of patriotism among the people. Poetry was the best medium because people could listen to the poems being recited. This gave rise to the poetry of patriotism. Most of the people were illiterate. They could not read Dogri, and as such, they could not enjoy Dogri prose.

When the conditions were stabilised, it was felt that whereas Dogri poetry had made a thick volume, there was a dearth of prose-literature. Appeals and conscious efforts were made to produce Dogri prose, because without its prose literature, no language can be considered rich or even adequate. Prof. Ramnath Shastri wrote short-stories, one-act plays and dramas; his Bâwâ Jittō was the first Dogri play; Prashant wrote Devkâ and Jittō plays; Vishwanath Khajuria wrote essays and one-act plays; Ganga Dutt Vinod wrote short-stories, essays and one-act plays; Rajinder Singh and Jittō; Bansi Lal Gupta edited Dōgrī Lōk Kathāān, Shamlal Sharma, Laksmi Narain Sharma, Nilamber wrote prose-essays and literary criticism; Shakti Sharma, Ganga Nath Sharma, Raghunath Dass Shastri, Madan Mohan Shastri, and Anant Ram Shastri wrote essays on religion, philosophy, astrology and astronomy (most of them are in the Dogri Section of Jammu Radio).

There was a crop of younger writers who wrote good short-stories. Lalita Mehta's Sōōī Dhâgâ was published in 1957. After that, Ram Kumar Abrol,

Ved Rahi, Madan Mohan Sharma, Narendra Khajuria, Nilamber, Kavi Rattan, Sushila Khajuria, wrote short-stories; and the stories of the first four and those of Kavi Rattan were published in different collections. Namī Chatnā, a quarterly, was started to propagate the cause of Dogri literature, and particularly Dogri prose. Earlier, College Magazine, Tawi had given a lead to other magazines for Dogri. Dogri Mandal also published a few books in Dogri.

After short-stories came drama. So far, a couple of good dramas have been written and staged. In addition to Bāwā Jittō and Devkā, Nāmā Grān, Dhāreñ de Athrōō, Sarpañch, Sñjālī, Sāār and Derī have been written. Nāmā Grān, Dhāreñ de Athrōō, Sarpañch and Derī are published as well. Narendra Khajuria wrote one-act plays: Ūs Bhāg Jagāne wālle haan, which were meant for children.

Just as novel is in many ways the descendant of drama, Dogri novel also owes something to Dogri drama. The dramatic action, dialogues, characterisation and people's problems—all these things seem to have been partially introduced into Dogri novel by drama. So far, four novels have been written by Narendra Khajuria (Shānō); Madan Mohan Sharma (Dhāārān te Dhōōṛān); Ved Rahi (Mallāh, Beṛī te Pattan) and Prashant.

All this bodes well for Dogri prose. This is a remarkable achievement made possible by the zealous efforts of the Dogri writers, notwithstanding their economic difficulties and lack of readers. Radio Jammu's contribution, however, needs to be acknow-

ledged which acted as a fillip to Dogri, and particularly, its prose literature. Of late, the State Cultural Academy has done a good job by helping the writers to publish their writings in various languages.

The difficult period is over. There is no desire to look back; only the need to look forward to new themes and new vistas.

Vishwa Nath Khajuria (1906.....). Vishwa Nath Khajuria is the elder brother of Prof. Ram Nath Shastri. By profession a teacher, he spent the major portion of his life in the rural and hilly areas of Jammu as an employee of the State Education Department. His stay in those areas provided him with ample opportunities to study the life and art of their inhabitants. He is deeply interested in, and greatly familiar with, the folk-literature and folk-dances of Jammu province, and has done a lot to popularise the folk-dances in the schools of Jammu.

Vishwa Nath Khajuria was one of the few writers who wrote in Dogri before the dawn of independence, and he has continued writing short-stories, one-act plays and prose-pieces on literature and folk-dances. Some of his writings on the folk-songs and folk-dances like Phūmniyān, Kūd and Bhāṅgrā—written for Jammu Radio—have been very informative. His prose style is lucid and direct, although the trait of the teacher to reinforce his point is present in his writings.

Vishwa Nath Khajuria has retired from the government service, but he still pursues his old profession; he works as a teacher in a private institution

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of Jammu. Off and on, he contributes his essays of criticism to the journals of the State Academy.

At the moment, he is busy in completing his manuscript on folk-literature and folk-dances of Jammu. He has also collected a number of Dogri folk-tales. Vishwa Nath Khajuria has been a stage-actor and producer, and some of his articles concerning stage in Jammu province have also been included in his manuscript.

Anant Ram Shastri (1910.....). Sh. Anant Ram Shastri is one of the well-known prose-writers of Dogri. He has been writing on religious and social topics. Being a teacher,—he is a Professor of Sanskrit in Raghunath Sanskrit Mahavidyalya, Jammu—the element of didacticism is prominent in his writings, but it is not always obtrusive.

Anant Ram Shastri's ancestors were from Poonch, and the influence of the dialect of Poonch can be seen in his writings. Sometimes, it creeps unnoticed, but when it does, it creates a rather unfamiliar effect.

Anant Ram Shastri, in the beginning, was very closely associated with Dogri Sanstha, but after 1955, there was a parting of the ways, and he formed Dogri Mandal. The Mandal has done some useful work in bringing to light some of the old monuments of Jammu by holding some photographic exhibitions. Shastri Ji has not only written and translated some books; he has edited quite a few of them. He has translated the world-famous 'Pañcṭaṇṇa' by Vishnu Sharma, and written on the life of the Farmer-Saint, Bawa Jitto. His Gulâb Charitra—a book on the

achievements of Maharaja Gulab Singh, the founder of our State has been published in Hindi.

Anant Ram Shastri has also written a Dogri Grammar on the lines of Hindi Grammar for school-going children, which is still in the manuscript form. He has also written articles, in Hindi and Sanskrit, on the literary and cultural aspects of Jammu.

Sham Lal and Shakti Sharma. "Trivenī" is the name of the book which consists of the collection of prose-essays written jointly by Shri Sham Lal Sharma and Smt. Shakti Sharma, man and wife in actual life. Like the other couple, Ved Pal Deep and Padma Deep, Sham Lal and Shakti are wedded to each other by a community of interests, both educational and social. Both are essentially teachers, and this aspect can very well be seen in these essays; they are written with a view to educating people, and developing a sound moral outlook on life.

Trivenī is a first major collection of prose-essays in Dogri. Earlier essays in Dogri were written for and broadcast from Radio Kashmir, Jammu, which dealt with a variety of subjects; some essays were published by D. C. Prashant, but not before the publication of Trivenī was a work of such an import undertaken in Dogri prose. Its importance is not only a historical one; it touches the various facets of language and literature and marks a clear stage in the development of Dogri prose.

In Trivenī, Sham Lal and Shakti Sharma are also interested in the linguistic aspect of Dogri. Even scholars like Dr. Siddheshwar Verma, Hazari Prasad

Dwivedi, Vijendra Sanatak and Prof. Gauri Shanker have spoken highly of this venture. Dr. Verma writes, "It is an intellectual adventure quite beyond my expectation, placing in a brief compass the wide range of linguistic, literary and cultural values before Dogri-speaking Community this work, the first of its kind in Dogri language, a work which will raise the intellectual level of the community for which it is intended."¹

"Triveni" has been divided into three parts pertaining to linguistics, culture and literature. The first part is concerned with Dogri language, its relationship with Bhaderwahi, a brief outline of Dogri language, the similarity of words and the eminence of Dogri language. The second part deals with the social and cultural aspects. What is culture? What is nationalism and its relationship with Hindi? and a few other essays which range from Gandhi to Vegetarianism. In the third portion are included the literary subjects like the depiction of female character in Dogri folk-songs, and translations from Batâl Pachîssî.

The prose style of Sham Lal and Shakti is lucid; the sentence-construction is simple and not involved. The aim of the authors has been to be intelligible to the readers, and the attempt has been successful in so far as the clarity of expression and the usage of language are concerned. The essays have one more peculiarity: they are brief and the authors seldom dilate upon what they wish to say. This is a great merit of the prose of these two writers.

1 Some opinions on Triveni.

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However, one does not find it easy to agree with the ideas expressed in some of the essays in 'Chhinnâ te aṇdh Vishwâs', Vāishnō Bhōjan etc. The ideas are orthodox, and even express the subjective self of the authors. At places, the authors have used certain expressions to facilitate their understanding by non-Dogri speaking readers. This implies that an attempt has been made to bring Hindi and Dogri nearer each-other. The essay pertaining to the depiction of female character in Dogri folk-songs is quite enjoyable and shows the sensitivity of the mind of the authors. The excerpts from Batāl Pachhissī are also competently rendered, and they help to sustain the interest of the reader.

Notwithstanding the drawbacks in the firm, if orthodox opinions of its authors, and a didactic style, Trivenī is a welcome addition to the growing volume of Dogri prose. As such it occupies a distinct place in the prose literature and shall be instrumental in strengthening the efforts to develop a Grammar for Dogri.

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Bhagwat Prasad Sathe (1910.....). Sathe was the first to write in Dogri prose. He is an astrologer and a palmist by profession. He was associated with Hindi Sahitya Mandal and wrote Hindi short-stories. But being a Dogra and endowed with a versatile language and a manner to observe people, he soon started writing short-stories in Dogri. Some of his stories do not have the technique of modern short-story, but his language is forceful and living. There is a conversational ease, an undulating rhythm and simplicity which have not been surpassed by any writer of Dogri prose. His Pehlâ Phūll (The first flower), a collection of short-stories, was the first published prose work in Dogri. The Pehlâ Phūll, though it is also the title of a story, is symbolic as well, for this Pehlâ Phūll became a precursor of other attempts in prose-literature : and Bansi Lal Gupta's Dogri Lōk Kathâân (Dogri Folk-Tales), and Dogri Sanstha's publication of Ekk hâ Râjâ were clearly inspired by the example of Bhagwat Prasad Sathe. Sathe's prose has all the simplicity, incisiveness and the vitality of the people whose language he writes; it is colloquial and has a local flavour. Even after fifteen years of their publication, the stories, though sometimes weak in plot and construction, sometimes hardly stories in the modern sense, still retain the native glory and strength of their language, and in their conversational style, they are hard to beat.

Sathe's stories are essentially a continuation of the folk-literature; only they are more self conscious and sophisticated. Kūṛmeñ dâ Lāmâ, Khaṛyañtra and Pehlâ Phūll are a strange mixture of history and legend,

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of reality and folk-beliefs, and it is because he captures in his stories these moods and beliefs of the people that they are a successful attempt from the artistic point of view. But Sathe was not content with only the historical aspect of his stories, nor with the folktales. He could not shut his eyes to the vice of Dhōri (Reciprocal marriage, in which a boy and a girl of a family are married to the boy and girl of another family), nor could he wink over the problem of the young widows in Sahârâ, nor the Hindu-Muslim controversy as created by some interested persons in his Mangtê dâ Gharât (Mangta's water-mill). Sathe's art is sometimes bare and sketchy, but he tried to bring into his treatment the psychological approach. Being the first short-story writer in Dogri, his art has many weaknesses, but it also has a freshness and charm which are generally inherent in a first work of literature.

Kūrmen dâ Lâmâ is a story based on folk-beliefs and mythical quality. There is a belief among some people that some yogis have the capacity to cause rainfall, or to divert clouds before they burst into rain. But Sathe has, with the witchery of his language, transformed this folk-belief into a rare piece of art. The story is simple: Mohru is a yogi with a jurisdiction over five villages. He has no one in this world to call his own except his young daughter Kesro. Mohru considered it his religious duty to preside over the weal and woe of the villages under his jurisdiction. He decided to marry Kesro to the son of Gangu, another yogi living in a village outside his jurisdiction. Gangu had always felt inferior to Mohru in the art of causing or diverting rains, but

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this time, on account of his son's betrothal to Mohru's daughter, he can raise his head higher.

It is the harvesting season, and the clouds are hanging low over the villages over which Mohru presides. Everyone is apprehensive; something has got to be done about it. Mohru is down with fever, and Kesro does not know the 'magic' to divert bigger clouds. Nevertheless, she would try. Unfortunately, the clouds are divided and one portion glides towards Gangu's village. She is upset, and her father feels humbled. How would he face Gangu in future? Kesro reads his thoughts. What, if she does not allow Gangu to become her father-in-law? She won't have to be reproached and her father won't be humiliated. She leaves her home. No one knows where she went. Mohru did not find her afterwards, nor did he receive his Kuram's (Gangu's) reproach.

To these bare details, Sathe has brought all the resources of his art. The language is firm, and the style is conversational. There is not a word which is too many, and every sentence contributes to the atmosphere; there is an intensity in the theme. The great thing is that Sathe does not treat his subject with an abstract touch, but firmly believes in what he says. This is the reason for its greatness. One really agrees with the view that Sathe's *Kūṛmeṇ dā Lāmā* can very easily rank with the world's best short-stories. With a few broad strokes, Sathe creates a picture of Mohru and Kesro which is both simple and life-like. Sathe's narrative skill is seen at his best here; one hears, as it were, the very tone of his voice.

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His Maṅgte dâ Gharât indirectly deals with the Hindu-Muslim controversy created by certain selfish persons, although at its surface value, it is a study in character. The characters of Mangta and Mohammada, as also his father, with their peculiarities, are ably drawn. This story, too, is marked for the precision of style and colloquial expressions. The description of Mangta who loves Mohammada, in spite of what people say about them both, is quite touching. The prose moves fast or becomes slow in its sweep as the moods of Mangta are marked with anger, regret and remorse. The unsophisticated nature of the people is portrayed by a few bare details but they are convincing nonetheless.

Sahârâ is a study of the problem of a young widow who is torn between her youthful feelings of regard for Ramu, her teacher, and the old conventional set-notions. The details are vivid, characterisation good. Sathe brings before his readers the disturbing aspect of society where a widow is always to be unfortunate and unlucky. Otherwise, how could she be a widow? Sathe's handling of his theme is quite sympathetic and there is an undercurrent of pathos and anger at such a state of affairs. The probing of the heart of the young widow, with its latent desires, is ably done.

Ammâ (Mother) is a mixture of history and legend, and it is episodic in nature. And yet the two characters of Amma and Raja Suchet Singh are life-like.

Dôhrî (Reciprocal Marriage) has a gripping theme and its language is incisive. Sathe is well-versed with the domestic problems of the people of Duggar, and

Dhori is a blot on the name and culture of the Dogras, particularly when Dohri is a marriage between unequal couples, unequal in age and status. How people err out of affection and how quite the opposite results flow as against the one intended—this is described by Sathe with full understanding. There are notes of anger, irony and regret at the lot of Giyano who is not only an individual but symbolises the fate of all other girls who are given to unequal matches in reciprocal marriage. The prose, which is jerky at times and swift at others, expresses the state of mind of Giano; and if we feel indignation at such customs, there is an element of compassion as well. The state of Giano's feelings, when she comes to think of a youngman's remarks about her ('Giano, you are really beautiful') is described with a rare skill and insight. The end may appear to be sudden, but it is meant to symbolise not so much the death of Giano (although she actually dies in the story), as to warn us against the tyranny of sex, of such a social system which needs must die if Giano's of Duggar are to live.

Pehlâ Phūll (First flower) is a mixture of history and legend. The story assumes supernatural proportions, but it is treated in a natural manner. As earlier said, Sathe treats his subject in a way as if he believes in it. This makes his stories natural and realistic even when he deals with quite unearthly and fantastic subjects. He believes in the folk-beliefs and describes them with full conviction. This is true of his Kurmeñ dâ Lâmâ and Phelâ Phūll. We find in them, what Coleridge used to say, 'the willing suspension of disbelief.' His language is always ready to obey him.

Bōōbañ dī Nūhār is merely sketchy; it is not a story at all in the modern sense. Hēēkhī seems to have been based on the folk-song Jēēneñ Nāreñ de Kāīnt Marī Gaye, Mūshkal hōn Gūjāre channā Jī (Hard indeed is the lot of those whose husbands are dead (in the battle-field). It has all the ingredients of a story but it is not a story proper. The end is too abrupt which is more contrived than natural. Kharyāntra (Conspiracy), which is taken from the leaves of Dogra history is simply episodic. It has no plot and no development. Sathe's latest Jaillō, which deals with the problem of young widows in society, who sometimes succumb to the temptations of the flesh, is handled with sympathy. The character of Jaillō is realistically drawn but in this story, Sathe's grip over his language has become loose. Sathe is living in Bombay at present, and at times one feels that although he writes in Dogri, he no longer thinks in it. However, one does see, though occasionally, the master's touch in this story.

Sathe's style of short-story is rather old: he is not very clever in the matter of plot-construction. But he still occupies a pride of place in the Dogri prose-literature, because he has touched almost all the aspects of Dogra life, and his language is still as vigorous and alive as it was some twenty years ago. His narrative skill is great indeed, and in the matter of art, which lies in the 'omission of the unessentials', he is still unsurpassed. The present writers of Dogri—Ved Rahi, Ram Kumar Abrol, Madan Mohan Sharma, Narendra Khajuria and Nilamber—have a more advanced technique but none, with the possible exception of Narendra

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Khajuria, can compete with him in exploiting fully the resources of Dogri prose, and embellishing it at the same time.

Sathe was the first writer of Dogri short-stories and with Narendra Khajuria, he still shares the first place. His prose style can still be a model for many a beginner.

Ram Kumar Abrol (1930...). Ram Kumar came to write Dogri through Urdu. Like Ved Rahi and Madan Mohan Sharma, Abrol used to write, and still writes, in Urdu, but realising his duty towards his mother-tongue, Dogri, and living and moving in the company of those who were working for popularising Dogri, he could not but express his ideas in that language. For this, he found the best subjects in the people of Duggar, their joys and sorrows, their quarrels, and their hopes and fears.

Ram Kumar was at one time working in the Jammu Radio Station, and was responsible for many a successful programme. He is a good actor, and he understands the technique of a play in the right way. It is natural that his association with the Radio programmes should influence the style of his writings. In them one finds the predominance of living and powerful personalities, expressing themselves in a forceful manner; and in the matter of plot-construction, there is found a rich technical skill in his stories.

But this influence of the radio on his material has not altogether been positive; it sometimes is responsible for artificiality and unnatural trends. In his collection 'Pāireñ De Nishân' (Foot-Prints), publi-

shed in January, 1959, Ram Kumar Abrol, like his other contemporary Dogri writers, has chosen the village environment. In his Introduction to this collection, Thakur Poonchi writes that "Ram Kumar's stories are successful to a great extent in painting the rural atmosphere and the social scene, although it is quite a tough job. There is scope for improvement but there is a variety and pathos. The stories have their own atmosphere, problems, style, and they show the intelligence of the author in understanding and expressing life. With time, he will gain artistic maturity ... he has to improve his skill as a writer and widen the scope of his canvas.¹"

This appreciation of Ram Kumar's stories, on the whole, is sound, but Thakur Poonchi has not drawn the attention of the readers to Abrol's shortcomings in the matter of his language and style. As pointed out earlier, Ram Kumar came to Dogri through Urdu, and many a time one feels he is thinking in Urdu but writing in Dogri. There is a strong influence of Ahmad Nadim Kasmi and even Balwant Singh in his *Dō Athrōō* (Tears), and '*Gaīrtōō Dâ Mūl*' (The price of self-respect). In fact, his *Dō Athrōō* is inspired by Ahmed Nadim Kasmi's *Gandâsâ*. To say that it is the rendering in Dogri of Ahmed Nadim Kasmi's story will hardly be an overstatement; the language which is spoken and written in Urdu is not the same one which we use in Dogri, and simply by changing some Urdu words into Dogri, without changing their comple-

1 *Pāireñ de Nishān*.

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exion or context, their idiom or association. we cannot say that the language is Dogri. This weakness stands in one's way of enjoying and appreciating Ram Kumar's stories, for, if language interfeeres with, instead of helping the ideas, it is a serious flaw which dilutes seriously the readers' sense of enjoyment and the writer's capacity to express himself in a clear manner. This weakness Ram Kumar shares with Ved Rahi, and to a lesser extent with Madan Mohan Sharma. Moreover, Abrol's style is highly academic. In short-stories where the conversational style expresses the ease and the flow, the changing mood of the speaker and that of the writter's, the academic style looks artificial; it sounds forced and heavy. Ram Kumar's prose in this respect is too self-conscious.

'Khetrein Dī Buñd' (Division of Land) is based upon an intelligent idea. The question of possessing the land causes rift in a family of three brothers. Their mother and grand-mother have spent their days in those fields, and the rift, resulting in this division, is too much for them. The grand-mother commits suicide by jumping from the rock. The story starts from this place and everything is narrated by the mother of the youngmen whom she chides for causing her death. The sons repent and decide to live jointly, without vivisecting the land. The character of the mother is the dominant one in the story. The sons are dim personalities who are distinguished only because they bring their mother into prominence, although in themselves they appear more to be acted upon than actors. The defective language, inept words and wrong epithets, as also a heavy style mar the beauty of the story. The style

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of the narrator is so much merged into the writer's style, that it ceases to be moving.

DŌ Āthrōō is highly indebted to Kasmi's Urdu short-story. Gañdāsâ. The main problem was to show how a strong and ferocious-looking man, who is a terror to the people—for anyone who opposes him goes to his grave—is made soft on account of his love for a woman who is the fiancée of his sworn enemy, and how, in the very moment when he is about to kill him, the innocent face of the girl dances before him, and he spares him, at once conscious of his weakness (?) and his love for her; for he knows he cannot gain her love or respect if he kills her fiancé. How to show him as both ferocious and soft at the same time, so that in the very moment of his anger, he is melted to tears by his love; so that the two contrary emotions are simultaneously engendered? This situation has been admirably created and resolved by Ram Kumar Abrol. It does not matter that it is a reproduction of an Urdu story. That he conveys successfully the idea of a man who can, without his will or knowledge, feel a gush of tears at the very height of his ferocity, is of great credit to Abrol. The characters of Bânkâ and Massân's fiancée are described in a forceful manner. The girl is beautiful but is not self-conscious in the least. This lack of self-consciousness makes her bold and defiant, and this attitude of hers, more than her beauty, wins Banka's heart. That she treats him as a non-entity is what attracts him to her, and that helplessness of a strong man is vividly portrayed. The story is not without the usual defects of language, of Hindi and

Urdu phrases, of too artificial and ornamental a style. But some of the scenes—of the wrestling match, Banku's first meeting with the girl, and the last scene,—are quite effective.

'Gāirtū dā Mūll (Price of self-respect) has the seeds of a powerful plot but its end is rather disappointing. Ram Kumar's style has a natural vitality when it concerns some powerful individuals, but he cannot describe the finer emotions so easily. The dialogues are very impressive but some wrong descriptions ('her eyes were blue like those of an antelope), and exaggerations diminish its overall effect. The atmosphere of the village life, with intriguing money-lender, simple and unsophisticated people, some of whom are prepared to sacrifice everything for their self-respect and family prestige, is quite natural, but the end is contrived. The fire-scene looks like the one which we often see in some of the Indian films. Sometimes double-epithets, belonging to two different languages, produce a jarring effect, instead of enhancing it, such as 'Hasde te Mūschrānde' (smiling) 'Lisse te Kamjōr (weak).

His Mamtā dā Riṇ (Filial Obligation) contains some ornamental descriptions. Such a style has become rather out-dated. The idea is a clever one—the wife finds in her young child the image of her dead husband, and his parents find him in the image of their grand-child—but its handling is at times boring.

Pāireṇ de Nishān is, in more than one way, disappointing: there are the same faults of language, of double-epithets, inept words and expressions,

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repetition and circumlocution. The success of a short story lies in its directness, in its simplicity and the unity of atmosphere. But it is full of redundant expressions which spoil the atmosphere and weaken the plot. Certain details appear as if they were taken out of an essay. The writer has banked too much on the ornamental language of conceits to create the atmosphere of fear and uncertainty; the style is artificial and contrived.

The writer has a contemporary scene, and one with which we are most familiar. It is that of community project, of Sharmdan or voluntary labour. The writer seems to have this aspect present in his mind when he was writing this story. Being a co-author of *Namân-Grân*, which also tackles a similar theme, he wanted to express through description what he had already done through action and dialogues. This idea of the utility of voluntary labour, of community projects, and what a tremendous work can be done by combined efforts, is a very good subject for a political speech, a literary essay or a thesis. But if the same idea is to be described in a short-story, the writer has got to be very careful lest he should be taken for a propagandist. Unfortunately, Ram Kumar Abrol does not seem to be conscious of this manhole; and hence the story reads more like an incident which aims at preaching a sermon on the value of combined efforts, which result in big and mighty tasks, and without which human beings have to suffer even death and devastation, as Ramu had to suffer in the story. And the foot-prints left on the mud reproach the villagers with Ramu's death and they determine to construct a bund not only to protect them-

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selves and their fields against future incursions of a rivulet in spate, but as an offering, an atonement for their neglect for which Ramu had to sacrifice his precious life. The transition from the past into the present tense appears quite sudden and jarring.

Pāiren de Nishân is Ram Kumar's first attempt in Dogri short-stories. Dogri prose literature, and particularly Dogri short-story, is of recent growth. The development of a language depends upon its prose development. Dogri prose is yet in its nebulous form, and the writer of short-stories has to face enormous difficulties in expressing himself in a simple and lucid style. Ram Kumar Abrol lives in the cities, and he writes in Urdu. He has also written a Play, *Insân Jēt Gayā* (The Triumph of Man), in Urdu. The influence of Urdu is marked in his style, and the language is, therefore, a mixture of Dogri and Urdu. But Abrol's forte is the character-depiction and forceful dialogues. One hopes Abrol's future stories will be free from these defects of language and heavy style.

Nilamber Dev Sharma (1931.....) Nilamber is essentially a short-story writer in English and Hindi. Having been a Lecturer in English, the influence of English literature on his thought, ideas and writing is natural, and this influence is quite unmistakable on his Hindi and Dogri short-stories. Nilamber has been closely associated with the movement for the uplift and development of Dogri. He has intensively toured the hilly areas of Jammu Province. The scenic beauty of the hilly region and the customs and manners of its people have left a deep impression on him. One of the best

and the easiest way to express those impressions was through the medium of Dogri.

Nilamber has not written many short-stories in Dogri. His language is a language of the cities wherein Dogri words are sometimes inextricably mixed with the Punjabi and Hindustani words. The language which one finds in the writings of Sathe, Dinoo Pant, Narendra Khajuria, Lalita Mehta and Vishwa Nath Khajuria is the language spoken in our rural areas and in many Dogra homes. The language of Nilamber, like many others, is the language of city-bred and Hindustani-influenced people and his style is that of an introvert. In the matter of technique, plot-construction and style, the influence of English is quite visible.

His *Pahâre dī Kahânī* is about the hilly areas and relates to the custom of *Dhori*, (reciprocal) marriage which is so common in the hilly areas of Jammu, Kangra and Kulu etc. The story brings out, though quite indirectly, the ill-effects of unequal marriages. The writer goes to a village and enjoys its scenic beauty and expresses whatever comes to his mind. He is completely unmindful of everything, even a young girl who is intrigued by this behaviour of his. In the beginning, she tries to avoid him, out of apprehension, but now she comes and sits very near him, her cattle grazing nearby. What does he write? she wants to know. And he relates to her the yet incomplete story: A girl was given to an old man in reciprocal marriage. She was too young to understand marriage at that time, being hardly nine then. Now she is young and grown-up, her husband in his late forties, and suffering from consumption. What is her fault that she should suffer all

this ? Others there are who are happily married or who enjoy their life without suffering what she has to suffer. Why is all this ? She did not feel this injustice so much until she came across a young man for whom she felt an instantaneous liking. What should she do ? On the one hand, there are the social considerations, on the other, there is love ; she feels baffled. The narrator stops. 'What next?' she asks impatiently. He looks at her; tears are glistening in her eyes. He has not finished yet, he replies. 'Are you an astrologer?' she says. He smiles, 'Why so?' 'Because to me this appears my own story.' The narrator is stunned. He understands at once the cause of her tears....She suddenly rises from where she was sitting, and says, rather shouts, 'This is my story, stranger, my story!' Her voice resounds, and he feels as if the whole range of mountains was shouting, 'this is my story, stranger, my story.'

The story ends in a suggestive mood but herein lies the severe indictment of this custom, of the whole society which has been tolerating, nay, encouraging this evil practice. The mood of the narrator is detached; the character of the young girl and the conflict of her mind are described objectively, not expressed subjectively. This detachment lends poignancy to the theme and makes it a moving experience. But there is no sentimentalisation, no rhetorical outburst. The story remains unfinished, because such customs are still there; such cruelty is not over yet.

His 'Jeb-Katrā' (Pick-pocket) delves into the mind of a person who is forced to pick-pocket, but even towards his end he retains a grain of humanity. The end—rather tragic—is contro-

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versial. Some people challenge the desirability of killing (rather letting him be run over by a tram) him at the very moment when he regains his lost nobility; it creates a sense of waste. Others feel that the end is natural, because in life not everything happens in a way we wish it to happen. Those who wish him to live, they say, are imbued with idealism, but reality is sometimes harsh. He was dead when he became a pick-pocket; he lives even in his death, they contend. The method is psychological; characterisation—there is only one character—is natural and language simple.

His 'Bhatkè dā Mânū' (The stray-traveller) again relates to the hills. This story is more dramatic; the influence of English and European literatures is quite pronounced in it. One can genuinely ask if it is not a defect, for an average reader is hampered in his enjoyment by certain literary allusions, and the atmosphere at times is too romantic to be true.

His *Trāi Bhenāñ* (Three sisters) is a study of three characters, at three different stages—adolescent, youth and experience. The story is psychological, for it deals with three sisters who aim at the same thing, love, but their approach to it and their attitude towards love and life are conditioned by their age and experience.

His stories are meant for the educated; his style is literary. The language is the language of the cities. This, however, is at once an appreciation and a criticism.

Narendra Khajuria (1933...). Narendra Khajuria is the younger brother of Prof. Ram Nath Shastri and Shri Vishwa Nath Khajuria, both of whom have

done a good deal of work in and for Dogri literature. Narendera has seen many ups and downs of life, and is, therefore, alive to the pain and miseries of others.

Narendra has been a school teacher in small schools of small villages, and as such, he has spent a good deal of his time in meeting the people, understanding their problems, and suggesting them their solutions. It is quite natural to find the tone, the very inflexions of the voice of those people in his stories. Unlike Ved Rahi and Madan Mohan Sharma, who write in the language of the cities, and unlike Ram Kumar Abrol whose style is sometimes heavy and artificial, Narendra writes in the language of the Dogri-speaking people. His style is natural and conversational; there is a grace in his language which brings to mind the style of Shri Bhagwat Prasad Sathe in his *Pehlâ Phûll*.

Narendra writes about the people he has seen and met, discusses the things which he understands and creates an atmosphere with which he is quite familiar. In many of his short-stories, he has written about children, and those children seem to be the ones who have read from him, spoken to him in the class-room and outside. The result is that his characters are life-like; there is a touch of authenticity in his narration and his art appears artless. This apparent artlessness is the result of Narendra's mature art.

'*Kôle dīyân Lakīrân*', published in 1959, is the first collection of his short-stories. The first story *Kôle dīyân Lakīrân* is the development of an idea which strikes him and it has the good qualities and defects of the elaboration of that idea. Narendra is

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fond of similies and metaphors, some of them are very fine and some are inept. This makes his language atonce robust and forceful; but at times it becomes vague and not so precise. The story is about a soldier on leave, who on account of rain, has to stay at a place where there is a young and beautiful girl who is to be sold for Rs. 300/- to a Hawaldar of his Company. He is shocked to hear this, starts disliking his Hawaldar friend for whom he had some respect, poses he has been sent by the Hawaldar to bring the girl. In the way, when he is going with the girl, he is torn between his liking for the girl and his growing aversion for the Hawaldar whom he considered a friend. His anger is converted into veneration when he comes to know that the Hawaldar had arranged to buy that girl for him, so that he should have a place—a home—to live. The twist adds a surprise but there are too many coincidences, all of them happening in a short span of twenty-four hours which make the story look unnatural. The stay of Shanker in the house of the girl, who has been 'promised' to the Hawaldar for Rs. 300/-; the Hawaldar belonging to Shanker's Company; conversation of the old man and the old woman on the same night on which Shanker is staying at their place; the payment of Rs. 300/- by Shanker, and the meeting of Shanker and Hawaldar—all are contrived. The writer is moving all the strings to achieve the planned end. However, the characters of the old man, cunning and calculating; the old woman who is worldly-wise; Shanker, lonely and romantic and the girl, are well-drawn

Dharti Di Beti shows the versatility of Narendra Khajuria as a writer of Dogri prose. But the story has

many defects; in it he has tried to present two environments, one rural and the other urban. Narendra's descriptions of the rural atmosphere are vivid and charming, but he sadly disappoints when he tries to paint those things which he has not seen or with which he is only casually familiar. The other drawback of Narendra is he does not pay any attention to the location of the incident. What is the locale? In trying to make it the story of every village, it sometimes does not remain to be the atmosphere of any village. This vagueness is a shortcoming. Proverbs or similes are profusely used, some of which are inept. As a story, *Dharti Di Beti* is mediocre.

Parmesrā dī Karnī (As ill-luck would have it) is also without any exact locale, though Nagar suggests Ramnagar. When the child-coolie says he is going to the Nagar (town) where from is he coming? At times Narendra does not pay proper attention to the time-factor as well; and similes, some of them excellent, do not suit well with the overall atmosphere of the story. *Parmesrā dī Karnī* is a pathetic picture of the village life, of a father who has lost his son, and whom he loved too much. He was a schoolmaster, and probably he died because he cared more for his work than for his life. Narendra was a schoolmaster himself, and this fact lends a poignancy to the details, for the narrator—the father of the dead son—tells him the story because he knows that his son, like his listener, was also a schoolmaster. The village scene—the garrulous villagers, more happy in disgracing or giving bad name to others, and the children who are won to their teacher's side by his love and devotion to them—is effectively rendered.

Din Vâr is an impressive story of the hilly areas of Jammu. Narendra Khajuria has studied the lives of those people—of landlords and money-lenders—who are outwardly very generous and polite, but who are always prepared to have their pound of flesh. Narendra lashes vehemently at hypocrisy and the inhuman brutes of the villages who enjoy a high social status and who have prospered on the misery of other innocent villagers. The effect of the cruelty of the Bajiya (land-lord) is enhanced on account of the utter simplicity of his victims who are ever so grateful for his 'kindness,' and who is always keen to exploit their simple, honest temperaments and their helplessness. As a depiction of this aspect of our existence in the hilly areas, *Din Vâr* is first-rate. One does not read the story; one lives those moments. The indignation of the writer, though described in a suppressed manner, powerfully affects the reader, and one asks when will the days of the Bajiya (landlords) who torment and trample Bhângs and Murkus (the victims of Bajiya) be over. It is also a powerful satire on the society which not only tolerates but becomes an instrument of such tyranny and oppression, an indictment of the political parties which preach equality and social justice and yet are the real cause of inequality and injustice. Narendra takes the lid off such a sham. The only question is, what next?

There are some rich descriptions, some romantic moments, the scenes between Bhagan and Suneetoo. the dialogue between Bhagan and the Patwari, the crocodile-like Bajiya—all are full of vitality because the language, their strongest medium—is living and forceful.

Narendra is successful because he does not mince matters but reveals to everyone the true aspect of society which is ugly and sinister though covered with all the artificial, deceiving devices. The scenes between the mother and the child are moving indeed, and this pathos fills the reader with a discontent with the social set-up: why should such things happen at all?

But one feels uncertain in the story about the detailed description of the feelings of Bhagan during her swooning. Is it symbolic, dreamlike or merely delirious?

'Eh Hasde Basde Lōk' deals with the familiar problem of domestic happiness and unhappiness. Ved Rahi has tried to show the contrast between the city and village lives in his Behnū dā Ghar. Maḷan Mohan has written Skōlṛe wherein he shows the contrast between two couples, their lives, the lives of the village and the city atmosphere. Narendra has shown two sets of lives: the poor can be happy in spite of their poverty; the rich can be unhappy notwithstanding their riches. Happiness is as much an attitude towards life as it is a state of mind. This attitude is clear even in his Dhartī di Betī, and here the poor wife is happy because her husband loves her and her husband is happy in seeing and making her happy. Their relatives are unhappy because, though they are well-provided, their minds are not contented. This is a trivial theme, and the conscious or unconscious habit of Narendra to present contrasts does not produce a happy result.

In Kī Phūll Banī Gaye Aṅgāre, Narendra proves his narrative skill and the mastery over the use of

language as a medium of conveying feelings and ideas in an effective manner. Faqir Chand, the young hero of the story, is one of the many pupils of Narendra who re-lives in his pages. The atmosphere of the class room is convincingly recaptured: the children with all their innocent talk, their prompt answers, their desires and ambitions are there before us. Sometimes the schoolmaster becomes prominent in his writings but otherwise Narendra is more restrained and detached. There is a mild irony in the dialogues: the teacher gives education to his students, but whereas they become big leaders, officers and ministers, a teacher still remains a teacher, and a satire that the students are anxious to become everything except to become a teacher. This may not be intended by the students, but it is intended by Narendra Khajuria, the schoolmaster. The story of Faqir Chand is the story of many children whose parents live and die under debt, and who toil hard to change this system and they cannot but become a prey to this system. Ultimately they are reduced to nothingness, their hopes dashed and their aspirations crushed. The story has a familiar theme, the one which the reader has already come across with in Narendra's *Dín Vâr*. There the young child is made over to the landlord by his mother in order to pay off the interest on the amount; here the father who has an ailing wife, has to force his son, against his will, to serve the shop-keeper because he is his loanee. Narendra Khajuria repeats himself. Nevertheless, this cruelty wherein the innocent are crushed, which makes the young look old before their time, draws the best out of Narendra. Narendra becomes one with the victims, suffers with

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them and though materially he cannot do much for his fellow-sufferers, he does it through his writings. His conscience is shocked, his feelings enraged and he lashes out with his direct hits on the perpetrators of this cruelty. The character of the shop-keeper, with all his cold and indifferent nature, though very much 'warn' when his own interests are concerned; Faqir Chand, the ambitious, exuberant young student who is full of ideas and desires to rise higher in life, but who proves ineffective in his effort to change his lot and becomes one more prey to the mill of injustice, are very much alive. They are no longer individuals; they become types, symbols of different values, different outlooks and conditions. The old conditions, however, prove stronger, tyranny yet triumphs over innocence and usury destroys many a home.

Khilān Chōle¹ is another of Narendra's story, though it is not included in this collection. This also deals with the domestic problems, the problems of poverty and the inability of the parents to marry their young daughter to a suitable groom.

Narendra Khajuria is a writer of social themes, and in most of his stories, it is the domestic scene which dominates other scenes. His canvas is essentially limited; it has not the variety and width of either Ved Rahi or Madan Mohan Sharma, but it definitely has a depth, an intensity which are not always to be seen either in Ved Rahi or in Madan Mohan. Moreover, neither of them can compete with him in

1. Yojna, Sanskriti Number, January, 1960.

the matter of style and the control over language. Some Hindi words do creep in sometimes, which appear incongruous, yet he has a felicity of expression possessed by very few of the writers of Dogri prose. Narendra generally writes about the rural atmosphere, the one where he lives and which he understands; he listens carefully to the speech of people and remembers their tone and voice and expresses it in a live way. This is his speciality. His style is essentially dramatic. His characters reveal themselves through dialogues; but sometimes the writer describes them for us. In the second case, a few broad strokes are sufficient to make them appear life-like.

Narendra repeats himself, but there is variety in his style and expression. His technique—plot-construction—is not so much developed in some stories, nor do his stories have much of psychological probings in them. His is primarily the art of a story-teller, and in this he has proved his forte.

Narendra's three stories are being published along with the three stories each of Ved Rahi and Madan Mohan Sharma. He has also written a short novel, *Shânō*, in Dogri which has been recently published; and even with these writings, Narendra occupies a privileged position among the writers of Dogri prose.

Ved Rahi (1933...). Ved Rahi is essentially a prose-writer, although he has written quite a good number of poems and ghazals, both in Urdu and Dogri. It is not a very easy thing to say that Ved Rahi is primarily an Urdu writer, for during the past four or five years, he has written so much in Dogri—poems,

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short-stories, a play, Dhâreñ de Athrōō and one novel, and has written one book of criticism on modern Dogri poets and poetry—that he has carved a very definite place in Dogri literature. Before coming to Dogri, Ved Rahi was a writer of Urdu. Rahi is very well-versed in Urdu and Hindi, and he has studied the latest trends in these literatures. Rahi is very hard-working, has a graceful style and a keen power of perception. His style is that of a psychologist. His characters reveal themselves not so much through dialogues as through his method of description and narration. Ved Rahi gets an idea and each of his stories is a development, an elaboration of that idea. All other things—style, dialogues, language—become a medium to express that idea. This does not imply Rahi is a propagandist. Far from that. But he is a conscious artist, and he knows what he is about. This consciousness is at once the source of his weakness and strength, for where his medium fails, his idea also suffers, thus weakening his art.

His 'Kâle Hath', a collection of short-stories in Dogri was first published in 1958. This collection was a welcome addition to the Dogri prose-literature which was quite scant; and a welcome was extended to him by the other prose-writers of Dogri, among others by Madan Mohan Sharma, Vishwa Nath Khajuria. In Ved Rahi's stories, one glimpses the life of the people of Duggar, their laughter and tears, hope and despondency, a touching description of their poverty, although nature has been quite bountiful to them.

It will be correct to term Ved Rahi's stories as the stories of character, although his characters are

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actuated by a certain idea. In Mūnūā dā Kūrtā (Munu's Frock), we are shown the working of the mind of a middle-aged woman who shuns children because she loves them, and because she has become a widow—a sign of bad luck. Therefore, she does not want that the shadows of misfortune hovering about her should ever influence them. This riddle of her behaviour, which to a superficial gazer appears as a trait of child-hate, is appropriately conveyed and resolved by Ved Rahi. The association of Tawi brings before us the picture of a devout lady who goes, early in the morning, to the said river. This local flavour is present in many of Rahi's stories as in Pāisā te Mgzdōōr. But what is incongruous, even repulsive, is the description of Būā's beauty by one who considers himself as her nephew. The description rather appears to be that of a lover: 'Her teeth, which peeped out of her lips, red on account of the walnut bark-brush seemed white and brilliant, Her eyes were half-closed, and her cheeks had become stained with pink colour.'¹

His language is a mixture of Dogri and Punjabi and Urdu. The idiom is that of Urdu; and it is because Rahi is so near Urdu that its influence creeps in his ideas quite imperceptibly.

'Tātō ōhr' also plays round an idea. How people, whether they are related to Tato Ohr or they are his neighbours, are scared of him, are filled with awe, and how Tato cleverly plays upon people's psychology because he is supposed to be very wealthy

1. Mūnūā dā Kūrtā

is what Rahi aims to show in this story. It is an excellent idea; it brings to surface the inner motives of the human mind. But Ved Rahi seems to be swayed by his idea so much that he forgets the vehicle of his idea—language. The result is that *Tâtō ōhr* becomes a tame reading. One starts suspecting soon after a few pages that the idea prevalent about Tato's fabulous wealth is a hoax which Tato himself has created in order to win respect for himself and create awe in others. And when one knows the truth, the discovery does not surprise; it comes as an expected thing. The first thing which makes one conscious of the discrepancy between appearance and reality is a sentence in the very first paragraph: 'Tato had died in his very first round. You will ask what is meant by the first death and the second death?'¹ When so much emphasis is laid by the author about Tato's supposed wealth, what people thought of him, one begins to suspect that the author is full of design, and one prepares oneself not to be taken in, and one is not taken in. This very instance of Rahi to create a suspense around Tato's personality and the myth about his wealth becomes the cause of undoing that suspense. And when the story ends, there is no surprise. However, the character of Tato is well-portrayed, for where the writer cannot deceive his readers, Tato succeeded in deceiving his relatives, friends and acquaintances, and therein lies the partial success of the story.

His 'Chhit' (Chit of a woman) is quite amusing. It is a study of four persons; two women, two men; one

1. *Tâtō ōhr* in *Kâle Hath*

married couple, one unmarried. The unmarried girl is known as a mischievous creature—Kanta—who prattles. She is the student of a teacher whose wife fears that since Kanta is a 'chhit,' she may not try to lure her husband who is a simple soul. She warns her husband about her misgiving. He laughs over it. The next day 'Master Ji' goes to teach Kanta. She makes a startling disclosure: Master's brother-in-law, Madan, had come to her, and in a verbal duel, when he offers to make her his wife, she retorts she cares not a bit for him; she will like to marry Master Ji. Master Ji is struck dumb and he rises from his seat and comes back to his place. His wife was right, after all. But how dared she think such a thing? His wife is surprised to see her husband, and she tells him the news which she forgot to convey earlier. Kanta has written to her brother, Madan, that she loves him and wants to marry him. All his anger and confusion disappears and he starts to go out. 'Where?' his wife asks. 'To teach Kanta,' he replies,

The characters of Kanta and Master Ji are real and life-like; they form a contrast. One is as much clever as the other is simple, but both are essentially good-natured. Instead of feeling elated at Kanta's words that she wants to marry him or feeling shocked or hurt at the disclosure of his wife that Kanta loves Madan, he acts as a respectable man and a dutiful husband. He is not sorry he has been fooled by that chit of a girl. This raises him in our estimate, notwithstanding the fact that he appears to be gullible. Kanta too, is essentially simple, and such naughtiness is the result of her exuberant nature and vibrant personality. The

story admirably succeeds in creating a humorous situation and in its successful resolution.

His 'Bhenū dā Ghar', though meant to indicate the contrast between the village and the city atmospheres, is artificial and forced. Ram Nath Shastri has also written a one-act play, Barōbarī (Equality) on a similar theme. There is a wide gulf which separates the two worlds of the city and the village. But does it? After all, it is not such a big gulf which cannot be bridged. In this case, the gulf exists in the mind of the writer which he does not want to bridge, for without this his story fails. The love of a small child for his elder sister who has been married and lives in a city could have been a subject even without the necessity of showing the contrast between the two lives. The marriage, resulting in her sister's separation from him, could in itself be effectively rendered into a story, for now, in the new environment, in her love for her husband and her brother-in-law, she is lost to him, and he is justified in mourning this loss. But as said earlier, Rahi's stories are a development of an idea, and where he cannot develop his idea into a rounded theme, his story fails to impress.

His 'Lehrān' is trivial, though the scene between the two women and their husbands and their two children is lively. The story has nothing original and quite a number of such stories have been written in Hindustani for the Radio. *Pesā te Mazdōr* (Money and Labour) is a story of two small children belonging to two different strata of society and a father who is a labourer himself but who wants his son to be

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educated. But one wonders what precisely the aim of writing this story was. The labourer dissuades his son from doing work for the sake of money; he persuades him to study, but once, when he sees his son carrying a basket without any wages, he beats him. why? Because he was being exploited?

It appears clearly that Rahi has not the same command over his language to convey his ideas, and as such, whereas his idea is dimly communicated to the reader, it is not properly conveyed to him by the writer. His Kâle Hath (Black Hands), which is also the title of the book, brings this weakness of Rahi very glaringly before his readers. The reader fails to understand the significance of black hands. Why are they black? Are they diseased? scarred, burnt? or is she black? From all accounts, Dr. Nisha, the central character of the story, appears to be pretty. Only she herself refers to her black hands. Do they have some symbolic meaning which the story tells but which the readers can't guess? Rahi's aim is to show that her ugliness resulted in her failure to marry the person she was betrothed to, and who married her sister instead. It is the story which disappoints one most because in it a wide gulf yawns between the conception of the writer and its execution. The greatest weakness is conveyed in the dialogues between Dr. Nisha and Dr. Gupta :

Nisha : 'How are these hands?'

Dr. Gupta : 'very beautiful.'

Nisha : 'you are lying : these hands are black.'

Dr. Gupta : 'But these hands have the capacity

to save one's life'.

'And also the capacity to take somebody's life,' snaps Dr. Nisha.

'I don't understand,' says Dr. Gupta.

Nor does the reader. The first idea which strikes the reader is that she has killed someone and, therefore, she thinks her hands have become black on account of having done a 'black deed'. Does not Macbeth think of similar things? His hands are red with Duncan's blood. This is a symbolic interpretation. Or, she might have caused somebody's death in an operation earlier, just as she has saved a life now. And imagine the shock of the reader when he comes to know that her hands were literally black! But why so much stress on hands? In that case, her whole body and face would be black.

All said, this collection of short-stories is a bold venture of Rahi in adding to the prose-literature of Dogri. Rahi's technique is developed and he has learnt a good deal from Urdu Afsāna in-so-far as his plot and style are concerned. His canvas is much wider than that of many Dogri writers. In Dogri, however, he has got to work harder, for his language at places is defective and sometimes his sentence-construction is faulty. This defect has proved to be his weakest spot, for an ill-balanced sentence not only jars upon the sense; it seriously hampers the conveying of meaning.

In his stories, Rahi is not a dramatic writer, because in most of them, characters are revealed not through action, nor through dialogues, but essentially

through description or narration. But in their description, Rahi adds some psychological touches. However, one is not always sure about Rahi's psychological approach in his stories, for when a writer says 'perhaps,' or, 'may be, I don't know but...' time and again, it is not necessary that he is bringing to surface the hidden motives or the intangibles of the human mind; it may well be a serious disability of the writer to know precisely his own mind or to express what he wants to. This disability is betrayed by Rahi at quite a few places. It also indicates a longing for vagueness and a deliberate attempt to create an atmosphere which ultimately fails to impress.

But to say this is not to minimise Rahi's importance, for these stories are not his last word in Dogri. Rahi is a good learner and he is quick to overcome these deficiencies. That he has written a Dogri novel is an indication he knows there is a vast field before him, and this collection is an effort to mould his art into a maturer form. Notwithstanding these shortcomings in his stories, Rahi has surprised his readers by writing a Dogri novel, 'Mallâh, Berî te Pattan,' which is much more developed in its style and language.

Madan Mohan Sharma (1934...). Like Ved Rahi and Ram Kumar Abrol, Madan Mohan Sharma came to Dogri through Urdu. Madan Mohan started writing short-stories in Urdu when he was a college-student. However he felt it was easier and better for him to express himself in Dogri, his mother-tongue. But it was impossible to shake off the influence of

Urdu on him; the traces of that influence may be seen in most of his stories.

The most remarkable thing about Madan Sharma's prose is its irresistible flow. His garrulity, the habit to repeat a thing, reminds one of Defoe. The breathless speed with which his prose moves is simply astonishing, notwithstanding the fact that his vocabulary of Dogri words is limited, and Hindustani words and idioms crop up in his writings. And Madan also shares his weakness and strength with Defoe; like him, he cannot resist the temptation to say in detail what can briefly be said; and to dwell too precisely on the minor points till their cumulative effect leaves a reader stunned. At times, this effect is irritating and boring, for there is much of triviality, much of circumlocution in his stories, and one cannot help wondering why he cannot be brief and to the point. But this garrulity is his greatest quality, for herein lies the humour, which is at once in the story and also in Madan Sharma's art.

Madan Mohan's genius is that of a narrator. He does not conjure up some beautiful scenes with his magical description; he rarely probes into the inner mysteries of the human heart; nor does he try to sing very transcendent notes. He is concerned with the commonplace objects of reality, with ordinary men and women, with the domestic problems, which bring to people sometimes happiness and sometimes sorrow. They are not heroic in anything but in their day-to-day engagements, in their petty affairs, in their moments of joy and sadness. And because

Madan Mohan narrates these things intimately, as if from his first-hand knowledge of them, he occupies a special place in the Dogri short-story. His topics are almost the same which Lalita Mehta discusses in her stories, and his canvas is as much limited, but he brings an intimacy and an insight in his treatment which are quite refreshing, and which raise him higher than many other Dogri short-story writers.

Khīrlā Mānū, his first collection of short-stories, was published in February, 1959 by Dogri Sanstha. Prof. Ram Nath Shasrti, writing about his stories, says, 'In the stories we find some touching scenes about human existence. There is not only the subject-matter but the delicacy of feeling Every picture attracts the eye and the mind feels its grip In every story there is a glimpse of life. Madan Mohan has been brought up in the city environment. His language may not be pure Dogri, but his language has an undeniable flow. The pace of his prose quickens or slows as the feelings rise or fall. These stories have really contributed to the glory of Dogri Literature.'¹

'Eh Mard Bhi' (These Men) deals with a humorous situation. Two women, wives of two brothers, start quarrelling because due to the carelessness of the one, a cat has licked the milk. At once there is a verbal duel in which the ancestors of either are called to account by both the 'warring' women. The result is, as is a common feature in some of the joint-families, there is a 'strike' by both the women and no food is

1. See Introduction to Khīrlā Mānū

cooked. When the men come back home tired and find nothing cooked, they decide to help each other. They cook their meals and spare nothing for their wives and enjoy a sound sleep. Both the women are feeling hungry but they don't tell this to each other. One of them gets up slowly and comes to the kitchen in the dark and tries to find if something is left uneaten. There is nothing. The other also rises and comes stealthily. What a shock! The other one is already there. Peace is made and their anger directed not against themselves, but against their husbands, 'These men! We cook food daily for them, but they have not the courtesy to cook even once for us'¹

The story is as much of character as of situation and Madan Mohan acquits himself quite creditably. The quarrel-scene is lively and the end is hilarious. The characters of the two women are drawn in an authentic manner. The language is sharp and the blows are effective. There is a mild satire and the story has a light comedy. Some descriptions are apt: 'where women are always on fire (quarrelling), fire is seldom made in their hearths.' But repetitions are present even in this story. Madan Sharma compares the snoring of some of the brothers to the hissing of a snake., the sound of wind or the sound of two fighting cats, which is either inaccurate or exaggerated.

Prâhchit (Repentance) gives a new definition of 'atonement.' Human life is valuable and worth-living; it is not to be wasted in isolation or making oneself

suffer without a cause. The real aim of life is to be happy and to make others so. Instead of leading the life of recluses, Punnu Chacha and Ratna Masi atone for their negligence by deciding to marry each other, by working in the fields and doing some productive work. This is a new approach, a fresh one, quite in consonance with the realities and necessities of the present-day life. The story is marred by inept words and expressions, repetitive words and phrases, and long sermons. At times the beauty of certain passages, however, reminds the reader of Tagore's *Geetangali*. The character of Punnu Chacha is well-drawn.

Bhañd (Clown) is full of verbosity and circumlocution. A clown who laughs at everybody's cost, renounces this privilege when castigated by a teacher; but when once he loses control over his tongue, he curbs this habit by cutting off his tongue. This is too grim, nor does it carry any conviction with the reader, for whereas one cannot deny the possibility of such a happening in real life, for artistic purposes, it sounds a dramatic improbability.

Khitlā Mānū (The Last Man) is based on a good idea. A girl loves a man who also loves her, but he cannot own this love until his country becomes independent and all the miseries of the people are removed. She is married to another man. She remembers him sometimes but never meets him again. But what is this? She hears similar words from her own son who refuses to marry because he will be 'the last man'. How can he live happily when others are unhappy? The woman thinks: when will his dreams come true and she will see her daughter-in-law?

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The story ends rather too tamely. The yearnings of the growing woman, described in the flood-imagery, have a vivid quality; they sway one in their flow, but repetitive details become tiresome and one wishes if only Madan Mohan would not be carried by his own word-flood. The style is much like an Urdu short-story with profuse Urdu expressions. The temptation for long plat-form speeches is also very strong in Madan, and the speech of the son towards the end seems a part of some election manifesto or some chapter on Human Rights. The curious thing is Madan Sharma says even a trivial thing with all the seriousness of some important and serious thing: he is unaware that while talking of some sublime subject he has glided into the domain of the commonplace, if not of the ridiculous. And yet, in the story, there are certain intimate touches, some expressions which are charming because they are so simple and express frankly the desires of an average female heart for a hearth, a home and for the man whom she loves, and as a mother, the happiness of her sons and daughters.

His Skōlre is a story of female pride and jealousy as also the social customs and traditions prevailing among our people. After the marriage, the in-laws of the girl send a special 'present.' This system of 'presents' forms the subject-matter of this story. It expresses in a natural way the spirit of competition between two sisters, one married in the city, the other in the village; it also tells us of the conscious and unconscious comparison and the alignment of their female friends, even of the parents, with one side or the other. The scene is

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quite natural and Madan Mohan has described it with a rare insight and tenderness. He has vividly captured the feverish mind of Shanto from whose in-laws the special present has not come, to her disgrace and that of her husband and to the sinister satisfaction of her sister. But it is questionable whether the story required such an ending. It does not remain tragic any longer; it becomes melodramatic. The first passage—the cloud-imagery, the black and white clouds, stuffy atmosphere—describes vividly the condition of Shanto's mind. However—the beauty of such fine pieces is diluted because there is a defective construction of sentences, repetitions, lengthy details. The writer has described in a natural way the domestic scene, the female world, their pride and prejudices, their love and hate, and above all, their inquisitive nature, and their habits of prying into others' affairs. But the sentence about the shutting of eyes in the end leaves much to be desired; its construction is wrong and defective and it confuses the sense altogether. The writer does not mean to show that Shanto dies, but this is the impression which one gets from the last sentence.

Shâh (The usurer) is again a study of the domestic world and the prejudices which are prevalent against the birth of female children. Every daughter born is like a usurer who makes her family suffer, for at every stage money is to be spent on her. The heaviest burden comes at the time of marriage when dowry is to be paid like the 'compound interest' on the money borrowed from the usurers. On the other hand, superiority is attached to male children, and there are religious sanctions in their favour. Madan Mohan protests against this attitude

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of society, particularly of women who feel more unhappy at the birth of a female child in the family. The psychology of the mother and her mother-in-law is neatly described. The mistress of the house is pregnant once more. At one stage there is an element of suspense. But it does not last long. By one sentence, an inept one, which also acts as a weak link, Madan Mohan breaks that suspense: 'This is how people say, 'who can fight destiny?''¹ If one were expecting that there might be a son coming, this sentence breaks that illusion. Madan has shown a good knowledge of women's mind and their behaviour, but his old habit of sermonising stays even in this story. The sad end of the mother on hearing that she has given birth to a female child comes as an expected thing.

Madan Mohan has written some more stories in Dogri which have also been published recently. His stories show a definite advance which Dogri prose-literature is making, and he is sure to gain in effectiveness provided he curbs the temptation to dilate too much on every subject and theme. He has written one Dogri novel as well, *Dhârân te Dōāṛn* (Hills and Mists).

Lalita Mehta (1938 ..). Lalita Mehta is a young but talented writer. She is the daughter of Mr. R. L. Mehta, Professor of Geography, and has travelled a lot in the interior of Jammu province along with her father. She has a sensitive mind and in her stories we read the language which is spoken in

1. See Shâh.

our homes, and more particularly by our women. Dogri is a sweet language, and when one chooses, it can be made a vehicle for expressing very touching and delicate things. Lalita Mehta's collection of short-stories, as its title *Sōo-i-tāgā* (thread and needle) indicates, deals with the domestic problems and environment of Duggar. The success of an artist lies in his creating a right atmosphere, in saying a thing in the right way, so that the words and the ideas do not clash with each other but rather they help in forming the right imagery. Now, Lalita Mehta's stories deal with social problems,—more particularly the domestic problems—therefore, the language used must suit them. In-so far-as Lalita Mehta's language is concerned, it admirably succeeds in conveying that atmosphere. Her sentences are brief and the description appropriate. There is crispness in her dialogues, and the characters of her short-stories are revealed in a dramatic manner—through her dramatic use of the language.

A majority of her short-stories deal with the problem of poverty—amidst riches. The contrast is ever-present by direct reference as in *Tussari Kūrtā* (Tusser-shirt) and *Hañdōlā* (Marry-go-round), and by implication, as in *Sōo-i-Tāgā*. Lalita Mehta has an observant eye; she knows what happens in our homes, and with a delicacy, peculiarly feminine, she portrays the domestic environment. Her language is punctuated with a rhythmic beauty of its own, with a tenderness wherein sometimes, there is an undercurrent of irony. Professor Ram Nath Shastri, in his Introduction to Lalita's short-stories, writes, 'On reading her short-stories, I am convinced that she possesses many gifts peculiar to a short-story writer. She makes a suitable choice of

her theme ; there is a proper development of plot, and in her characterisation as well as her locale there is the art of a story-teller. Her stories offer various glimpses of the social life of Duggar. This is her peculiarity. Although her stories are not perfect from the point of view of the art of story-writing, there is in them a tenderness which touches the hearts of their readers. Therein lies her success. (See Introduction to Sōō-i-Tāgā)

While agreeing with Professor Shastri in the main, one thing is to be emphasised. The tenderness or pathos which we find in Lalita Mehta's writings is very often sentimentalised. When one revels merely, in feelings, sentimentalisation becomes a weakness and this weakness is common to Lalita Mehta, and Kavi Rattan Sharma. To identify oneself with one's character is a great quality, but it is also attended on by certain weaknesses. The feelings of the writer, in the form of exaggeration and sentimentalism-are likely to creep in, though quite imperceptibly, in his writings. Lalita Mehta becomes a prey of her own feelings, and hence on reading her stories, if one appreciates her style, the choice of her topic and theme, one somehow misses the direct impact of a compact composition.

In 'Tussari Kūtrā', there is a contrast shown between the rich and the poor—Shibōō and Kirpōō. The feelings which are natural to the human breast are alive in Kirpoo as well, and the helplessness which he feels in the company of his rich friend, Shiboo, is described with a sensitivity, delicacy and a remarkable ease. The conflicting emotions raging in his breast—the emotion of buying a nice shirt for his wife and the feeling that with the same amount, his cattle can be

fed for a month—are appropriately described. The domestic touch is there—the love of a man for his wife, the duty of a peasant towards his land and cattle. This domestic imagery enriches the atmosphere. The feminine feelings—the desire to get nice clothes and the desire not to have them by borrowing, described in the story, show the instinctive richness of Lalita's art. Notwithstanding all this, the end does not move us. It comes rather as an anti-climax, for the suspense created is not artistically resolved. The shirt preserved to be used at a ceremony has been stolen since long without the knowledge of its owner.

Her Châchū (Uncle) deals with an old man whose sense of respectability is violated by his two daughters-in-law who are always quarrelling with each other. This scene is common to many a home and hearth, not only of Duggar but all the places, wherever the joint-family system prevails. The irony which is inherent in the contradiction between appearance and reality, and its effect upon a sensitive mind of Châchū is praiseworthy indeed. The quarrel-scene is lively; its language is colloquial and forceful, and the scene reminds us of the quarrel-scenes in Madan Sharma's 'Eh Mard,' and 'Lehrân' by Ved Rahi. But whereas Madan Sharma's story has all the boisterousness and comedy, and Ved Rahi's quarrel deals with a trivial topic and ends in a trivial way, Lalita's quarrel-scene has a serious note; and the continuous nagging between his two daughters-in-law leads to the ultimate death of Châchū. Here again, the end of Chachu seems sudden and forced. Lalita is actuated by a feeling to de-

monstrate clearly the ill-effects of the domestic quarrels on sensitive minds, and this makes the story defective.

Hañdōlā (Merry-go-round) is the story of a poor widow whose small son does not understand the poverty of his mother. He insists on her to take him to the fair and when all the money is exhausted,—a few coppers—he insists that he would like to have a joy-ride. It has a moving description, a pathos born out of the abject misery and poverty of a widow and the innocent craving of a small child to enjoy the same pleasures which other children are enjoying. But here, too, the accent is on sentimentalisation.

Unlike Narendra Khajuria, whose stories do not give much idea about the locale, Lalita Mehta has a strong sense of geography. Her Bebū tells the story of a woman living in a village near Basantgarh. Bebu is a widow but a rich one. She is not timid; on the other hand, her name is dreaded by everyone. But some people have the temptation to loot her property. How she foils their effort is the theme of the story. The scene of intrusion is vivid and full of suspense. The atmosphere is similar to the atmosphere of many an Urdu short-story by Balwant Singh who describes scenes of dacoity. Bebū is made to appear physically feminine, but in her actual behaviour she is endowed with an indomitable courage and almost a ferocious nature. But as usual, Bebū does not have a natural culmination, and the last sentence sounds more like a description taken out from a biography: 'And this incident also became a part of Bebu's life-story'.

This weakness of Lalita that she does not or cannot develop her theme properly, interferes with her plot and seriously compromises her position as a great short-story writer. Her Gōpī is marred by some Hindi phrases, repetition, and artificiality, which is born on account of her insistence to create pity in the minds of her readers. The tragic ending of a majority of her stories, even though not warranted by artistic considerations, is introduced to appeal to the sentimental susceptibilities of her readers. And because there is no proper development of her themes and no natural culmination, the plots appear to be artificial and contrived.

Mande Bhāg (Misfortune) deals with a conventional situation. The jealousy of a step-mother and her desire to get rid of her step-daughter, is common enough. The girl, Bishni, listens to all this, and prays for her death. Everyone expects she will die. This expectation is not falsified, but there is a surprise turn. She has not committed suicide; she has been stung to death by a snake. Characterisation is not distinct and the end as expected: only it does not happen the way one expects.

Sōo-i-Tāgā is written with a purpose: to demonstrate that economic dependence of a woman can lead her to misery, but if she knows some craft, not only can she overcome that dependence, but she can win back the love and regard of her relatives. The style is awkward and the story moves shakily. There are many why's which are not answered. Sewing has been transformed in to a major domestic occupation

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with all the commercial possibilities and glamour. The story appears like a tale meant for children, and is told with all the seriousness and earnestness. This earnestness makes her story naive.

Lalita should be more practical in her approach to her ideas, pay more attention to the development of her theme, plot-construction, characterisation. And if she does not sentimentalise, her natural gifts shall prove as her real assets in the matter of writing good short-stories.

Kavi Rattan Sharma (1940) is a young writer. He has been brought up in the period of Dogri Renaissance. As such he has been influenced as much by the prevailing climate in Dogri literature as he is influenced by his family surroundings. Dogri is spoken at his place, but Kavi is receptive to every new word or idea; he has a sensitive mind. Like Ved Rahi, Kavi Rattan's stories are the elaboration of an idea, but due to his exuberant personality and youthful instincts, he tends to over-emphasise certain aspects without the proper aid of language. This aspect of his personality is quite prominent in his story *Dādi* (Grandmother). The narrator—a teacher—tells his story; it is a continuation of the past into the present. The narrator re-lives those moments of his life which, though buried under the thick layers of many years, are still fresh in his memory. But the writer mentions them rather sketchily. A small girl comes to read from him. She is the daughter of his father's friend. The boy behaves towards her in an elderly fashion; she is child-like and simple and pretty. She is shy and there are hints, casually dropped, that she may be

liking him. But it is an undefined emotion, or at least, a vague one: the relationship is uncertain even to the two characters. One day he hears his student—Sita—is gone to Srinagar, for her father has been transferred there.

Many years elapse. He is a grandpa now, and his grandson accompanies him on evening walks. There he meets her, just by chance, and comes to know that she loved him and he loved her too . . . She dies and when his grandchild asks who she was, he feels like saying, 'Your grandmother, child'. The idea has all the ingredients of a good short-story, but his lack of grip over the details and language, and his style which betrays his age, often make him sentimentalise. He begins to leave certain things vague and undefined—he enjoys this vagueness. This romantic trait is on account of his youthful years.

His Sherōō (the story of a faithful dog), is also indicative of his emotional temperament. The idea is good: the sympathy of a master for his dog, who is overrun by the carriage of the Jagirdar who wanted to avenge the insult inflicted on him by the dog as his well-fed Alsations had been humbled by him. The story has some fine descriptions: it contains some glimpses of the domestic life, the hardships of the peasants. The ego of the landlord causes the fearful revenge. But the sentimentalisation is there—the sorrow of the boy for his dead dog, his grief-stricken face, even after a decade, at the pit where his dog Sherōō was buried.

His 'Dōlī', the first story he wrote is based on common experience—the marriage of a rich girl to a rich

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man whom she has not seen, against her wish, and the story of a poor man who loves her and yet he cannot marry her because he is poor, for our society yet cannot tolerate such marriages. The theme is common to so many stories in Hindi and Urdu, but Kavi's approach is individualistic. The tendency to sentimentalise is there, but this tendency is the result of a trait of idealism, the result of his youthful personality.

Kavi Rattan has a lucid style: his sentences are touching at times, and his lack of maturity is compensated for by his delicate feelings, his inbred abhorrence of cruelty and oppression in every shape and form. This is yet the beginning and Kavi has a field before him. Only, he needs greater restraint in his expression, to sift and stress the things in a more objective way.

DRAMA

Jammu has an age-old tradition in stage—drama. Apart from the plays arranged and organised by certain societies and organisations, there were people's theatre-groups which used to organise and stage religious plays. The staging of the scenes from the Ramayana and the Mahabharata by the people's theatres or Râs Mandlîs and Nâtik Mandlîs in Jammu and other towns and villages goes to prove that drama is deep-rooted in the people's culture. During Holi days, peasants would perform dramas in the open air. In addition, there were many stage-shows arranged in Jammu by the different clubs which existed there at one time or the other. Those plays pertained to historical, social and mythological issues. For a fuller history of the stage in Jammu, Mr. D.C. Prashant's article on the 'Rise

And The Fall Of Stage In Jammu' may be consulted (Yojna, Sanskriti Number, January, 1960). Mr. Prashant has shown how the dramatic clubs and the artistes both from the State and outside staged plays. They were patronised by the late Maharaja Pratap Singh and Maharaja Hari Singh. Later on, local drama clubs were formed. Sanatan Dharam Natak Smaj is the best-known and the oldest one. In various towns and villages, stage facilities were improvised, and sometimes open-air shows were held.

All these years, the plays staged were written in Urdu, Hindi and Punjabi. There was no Dogri play written or staged. But with the movement for national and regional languages in the country, some-

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writers started writing stories and one-act plays in Dogri—Mr. Vishwanath Khajuria and Mr. D. C. Prashant wrote the first Dogri one-act plays, and in 1948, at a Political Conference held at Tikkri (33 miles from Jammu), the first play in Dogri was staged by a group of artistes. The play entitled, *Eâwâ Jitô*, was the dramatisation of the life-story of the great peasant-saint, Pawa Jito of Ghar who lived some three centuries ago. It was written by Prof. Ram Nath Shastri. The stage did not have a proper drop-scene or curtains, nor was there any make-up arrangement or equipment. The lines were not fully rehearsed, nor were the artistes professionals. And yet its successful staging before a large audience brought before the writers of Dogri and the people the simple fact that they would like more such plays.

A beginning was made. After that, more writers turned to writing Dogri drama and one-act plays. Mr. Vishwanath Khajuria, Mr. Prashant, Mr. Ved Rahi, Prof. Ram Nath Shastri, and Mr. Narendra Khajuria wrote many more one-act plays; Dinoo Bhai Pant, Ram Kumar Abrol and Shastri wrote together *Namâ Grân*. Ved Rahi wrote *Dâreñ de Athrôô*. Shastri's latest play is '*Sââr*,' a play on the supposed romance between the two distinguished personalities of the reign of Raja Ranjit Dev—Mankoo, the famous lady painter, and Dattu, the renowned poet of '*Kiliâ Battanâ*' fame. Dinoo Bhai's *Sarpañch* is a new landmark in the history of Dogri Drama.

Almost all the plays written in Dogri have been staged before large audiences, although not all of

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them have been published. Their appreciation is due to the fact that some of them have a high literary merit and others were very well-acted. But the greatest reason is that hitherto the Dogri-speaking and Dogri-understanding public was without any play whose theme and language they could fully understand and enjoy. This had a two-way influence, both on the people and the play-wrights. Both can teach and learn from each other. The success of the Dogri plays on stage so far has clearly indicated that it has vast potentialities as a public educator and mass entertainer. At the same time, it shall definitely reinvigorate the stage and its traditions in Jammu and develop the linguistic and verbal vitality of Dogri and enrich, more particularly, its prose-literature.

NAMĀ GRĀṆ (1957) is not the work of a single author but is the result of collective efforts. Prof. Ram Nath Shastri, Shri Dinoo Bhai Pant and Shri Ram Kumar Abrol are the three authors of this play. Such a play of collective authorship has certain peculiar problems and features: whereas it is likely to contain the best of all the three writers, it is also likely to contain their inherent weakness of style and approach. At the best, it can be a compromise, and compromise is not always the best thing.

But as Prof. Ram Nath Shastri has said in its Preface, 'The desire for the reconstruction of Duggar was uppermost in our minds when we started writing it,.....Attention was, therefore, chiefly paid to the stage-craft and the spirit to contribute to the constructive work being carried on in the State. It was hence a compromise

between the literary merits and the literary propaganda.'

The main purpose, as has been said earlier, was to create a consciousness among the people what a transformation can be brought about by the united efforts of the people. There will be persons with vested interests (like Babu and Santoo Shah and Pant) who shall be hostile to new changes and new order, but their hostility will be overcome by the steadfast and perseverant efforts of persons like Jamadar and Madho. And as none but the brave deserve the fair, Madho, by his spirit of selfless service, courage and devotion, wins the heart of Lajo, the village belle, Jamadar's daughter, and the heroine of the play

The scene is set in the rural atmosphere, and all the characters are from village (Even Babu, who has been to the city, belongs to the village and Jamadar, though he has been outside, is essentially a villager). As the title suggests, the play aims at building a new village—a better village than the present one. As such, there was bound to be some sort of propaganda or at least, some sort of idealism. When something is written with the definite aim of instructing the people to a better way of life, it is but natural that there should be a mixture of realism and idealism. A political speech or an instructive talk can't be much effective; it can simply pass over their heads. But due to its unique position, stage can be a very great factor in influencing people. Stage lends a direct impact to the whole issue. We see certain people, like we are, on the stage with different views and opinions and representing certain values. They look quite natural, and when they act on the stage

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or when something happens to them on the stage, the visual effect on the audience is great indeed. The stage performance convinces us in a better way than a speech or a writing does. And from their experience or fate we draw our own conclusions. The good acting, mixed with powerful dialogues and stage-setting, have the power to move our feelings according to the situation and we are filled with anger and hatred, sympathy and fear, love and joy. We start loving some and hating others. And then the audience are driven home the moral. Sometimes moral is inherent in a play; at others it is very explicit and direct.

Namâ Grân was written with a message : that joint efforts of the people can lead to prosperity and happiness in the village and the intrigues and opposition of some cannot stand against the determined will of the people. In drama, more than in any other field of literature, characters at once become protagonists and symbols of certain values, and the success of a play or the play-wright depends on the extent to which the characters are able to personify those persons or values. From the very beginning, we know that Madho and Jamadar, along with Rasila, represent the good ones; Santoo Shah, Babu and Pant represent the bad ones. There are intermediaries : some are weak; others are hesitant and unclear in their attitude and behaviour. All such characters, or rather groups and classes, are present in our villages. Namâ Grân deals with live problems and to the extent it poses those problems and answers them, it is a success. There is nothing that is artificial or unnatural in-so-far as those problems are concerned. There are the problems of

untouchability, of capitalistic and feudalistic exploitation, superstition and ignorance. All these are ably dealt with. Namâ Grân can be any village of Duggar in our State. Similar people appear to be living in almost all the villages. This lends universality to the theme. And the development of the theme is quite natural on the whole. There are not black and white contrasts. The village scene, where three women, representing three types, converse, is very lively. Dialogues at times are forceful and effective and their style is colloquial and incisive. The technique of the play is simple and it is very easy to perform on the stage. The sets can be arranged without much difficulty. Plot-development is quite satisfactory and many of the things flow logically from the cause-and-effect process.

And yet in spite of all these qualities, Namâ Grân, though a very successful stage-performance, is not a first-rate literary piece. Much of its literary merit is sacrificed to the stage-conveniences and to the spirit to contribute to the constructive work going on in the country. Moreover, certain items, like songs and spectacle, are introduced to affect visibly the audience, notwithstanding the fact that they don't contribute to the story, nor do they have much relevance to it. The influence of radio-play or a film-story is quite marked on it. The character of Madho is consistent only after the first scene. He does not appear either ignorant or simpleton, as he is made out to be in the Introduction. Nor does the Madho of the first scene agree with the later Madho. The Madho of the first scene is forced in the story

and on the audience to suit the convenience of the authors. This transformation after the first scene—for it is nothing less than that—is unnatural and unwarranted. The songs might have been reduced in number. The motives of Babu could be more clearly explained, and the pet-phrase 'Kâisâ Mūrkh Hâi' of Santoo Shah does not suit the context at times. The characters of Jamadar, Madho, after the first scene, Rasila, Santoo Shah, Pant and Lajo are well-developed but Babu does not impress one much.

There are some defects of the language as well, and the epithets formed by mixing Dogri and Urdu sound jarring, like Bhalâi—Bhetri; Garib Gūrbeñ, Maliyâmet). Probably, the authors were motivated by the desire to use alliteration. The speeches of Jamadar become too long and platform-like. Santoo Shah is very shrewd, cunning and more villainous than Babu can ever be. The end, though quite natural from the point of view of the purpose with which the play was written, seems rather too smug, for even if Santoo Shahs and Babus are finished in the Play, they are not actually finished and vigilance against their intrigues cannot be relaxed. The dialogues between Lajo and Madho lack verve and naturalness, and their last words do not impress :

Madho . 'Who has won ?'

Lajo : I win !

But with all these failings, *Namâ Gran* is a successful play on the stage; it has also added to the prose-literature of Dogri. On the stage it was so successful that Mr. S. K. Dey, Union Minister for

Community Projects and N. E. S. wanted it to be translated into Hindi. It has been staged in almost all the Tehsils and in many villages and towns of Jammu.

Dhâreñ De Athröö (1959). The success of Namâ Grañ gave a new impetus to the Dogri writers of prose, and Ved Rahi, Dinoo Bhi Pant and Ram Nath Shastri turned to the field of drama, and wrote such plays as Dhâreñ de Atröö (Ved Rahi), Sâar (Prof. Ram Nath Shastri), Sarpañch and Sanjlâi (Dinoo Bhai Pant). Ved Rahi drew inspiration from a folk-song which, in a very touching manner, comments on the evil custom of Dohri and unequal matches. But as the girl has been brought up in an orthodox environment, she keeps waiting for the time when her husband shall become young and understand the significance of love ; she cannot think of loving anyother man than her own husband. Desire, though mixed with pain, must give way to duty towards her husband.

The problem of Dohri and unequal marriages has been tackled by many writers in Dogri. Bhagwat Prasad's Dōhri, Nilamber's Pahare Di Kahnī are a strong indictment of this evil custom. Even Ved Rahi has written a story on Dohri in Urdu. In his Dhâreñ de Athröö, he wanted to dramatize the same theme. For this he had to plan everything beforehand. He wanted to use stage as a means of awakening the socitey from age-old slumber and to shatter this old but evil custom. It is clear that Ved Rahi wanted to do the same thing for the people through his play what Shastri, Pant and Abrol had tried to do for them in their

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Namâ Grân. Both plays are acutuated by the spirit of idealism, and as such certain things do not appear to be real at times. Rahi wanted to show in his play the evil effects of Dohri but this, by itsel , according to him will not be sufficient. Some remedy must also be suggested. The forces opposing these customs should be strong enough to vanquish the forces which perpetrate them. In this respect, the characters are balanced between the good and the evil, and they resemble, to an extent, the characters of a morality play: Lacchmi, Painch Mama, Rattan are the good characters ; Shambu Chacha represents the evil forces. Lajo is the object (heroine) around whom these forces revolve, and on whose account the decisive battle is fought. These forces become at once symbolic, and Ved Rehi shows the goodness in man becoming victorious over evil in and around him.

So far so good. But there are certain inherent weaknesses in Rahi's art which leave their effect on the play as well. He controls all the strings with the result that almost all the characters seem more acted upon than acting themselves. The only exception is Shamu Chacha. He, as it were, goes out of Rahi's control and assumes an independent existence. He makes himself felt, for he has a volition which we seldom witness in other characters of the play. Although Rahi has meant Lacchmi to be the central figure, he speaks through her rather than makes her speak for herself. This is a very serious flaw in the play, and reduces its vigour and personality. Only in the IInd scene of Ist Act, and IInd scene of 2nd Act, Rattan and Lacchmi seem to be animated with volitions

of their own. In IInd scene of Ist Act, the reference to the water-mill (of oppression), is symbolic ; it lifts the play above its mediocre situation, for most of the time the situation is trite and contrived, and the end is very melodramatic which, howsoever desirable, is far from convincing. Its language is defective at places. The scene is set in a hilly area, but the language is that of the plains, which is not spoken in that area but spoken in the cities. There are certain words which may be common to both Dogri and Punjabi, but the sentences are so constructed that sometimes they appear to be of the Punjabi. The play is not clear about time and place. Where does the story actually take place? In this case, Rahi resembles Narendra Khajuria. The vagueness about the locale definitely dims the distinctness of its features. (If it's not the story of a particular place or a particular region, it may not be the story of any area at all).

While writing the play, Rahi has summarily glanced through the supposed relationship between Lajo and Shamu Chacha. Whereas Painch Mama says she is his niece from her mother's side (Bhanai), others say he is her distant paternal uncle (châchā) and she also calls him by the same relationship. This drawback could have been very easily overcome.

Dharen De Athrōō is a play which can be staged without much botheration. The characters are not many, nor many sets are required. As he himself points out in the Preface, Rahi wrote it so that all the cumbrous elements which make the play difficult to be played on stage are removed. The play has been

successfully staged, and good acting glosses over the shortcomings of the play as a piece of good literature. But at a time when the history of Dogri plays was not old, Rahi's Dhâren De Athrōō was a useful addition to the Dogri drama.

KHIRLI BHENT. Prof. Ram Nath Shastri wrote the first Dogri play - Bâwâ Jittō. He is also the co-author of 'Namâ Grân'. He has written 'Sââr', yet in the manuscript form. He has also reproduced Tagore's 'Sacrifice' in Dogri as 'Khirlî Bhent'. This translation is from the English edition, written by Tagore himself. This is a shorter play than the one which is in Bengali; the number of characters is smaller; there are only two sets and few scenes, with the result that it is much easier to stage.

Shastri has not made many departures from the original; and the rendering is quite satisfying. One departure, however, is significant: the character of Nakshetra in the original is not comic as has been made in the Dogri version; at certain places the language becomes flaccid and the sentences are tediously long. The roles of Aparana, Jai Singh and Pujari are convincingly rendered into Dogri. Chand Mal and Senapati make brief appearances; and Nakshetra, on account of his comic nature, provides some lively moments. Maharaj and Maharani also are suitably reproduced.

Khirlî Bhent not only adds to the volume of Dogri drama, but it introduces the readers of Dogri with the master-mind of Bengal, Gurudev Rabindrâ Nath Tagore, and one is tempted to overlook its shortcomings as a piece of translation.

SARPANCH : by Dino Bhai Pant. Better known as a poet, Dinoo Bhai Pant's first attempt in play-writing was a joint effort with Prof. Ram Nath Shastri and Ram Kumar Abrol which resulted in the play, 'Namâ Grân'. This play could not allow a free scope to Dinoo's dramatic talent and his 'Sarpanch' came as a pleasant surprise to all.

The story tells us about Data Ranu, a Brahmin priest of Birpur, who sacrifices his life for the sake of justice and righteousness. There is a family feud between Bangi and Chaudhri, and Ranu is asked to mediate. As the Sarpanch, Ranu gives the verdict in Chaudhri's favour. Bangi cannot stand this and he conspires in a manner which results in the death of Ranu. Bangi becomes the ruler of his illaqa, but before long he has to pay the price for his cruelty.

The play deals with a historical subject, but Dinoo does not so much capture the pomp and pageantry of the royal courts as he depicts the contradictions which are inherent and intermittent both in the individual character and the social set-up. Hence it is that his characters no longer remain as mere individuals but they become types as well, and it is through them,—even through the minor characters—that we get a glimpse of that age, of the oppressed peasants and the oppressive policemen of the feudal lord, Bangi. Data Ranu is not only the priest of Birpur but he is the symbol of justice and righteousness, whom neither any threats can unsettle from the throne of righteousness nor can the wiles of the insidious hoodwink. Bangi is not only the feudal lord of Birpur who usurps the share of his cousin,

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Chaudhri, but he represents all those feudalists who want to thrive on the toil and share of others, and who, when they are surrounded by psycophants, lose all balance of mind and sense of discretion and justice and even in their impotence want to feel all-powerful. Chaudhri is not only the cousin of Bangi, but he represents the tenacity of the just, and though he is defeated by the circumstances and the intrigues of Bangi, he is never vanquished, for he wins in the end. Cholo, Bangi's brother, represents the human spirit which still remains untarnished by the corrupt environment, and for whom the dignity of labour is dearer than the luxuries of the idle rich. Mohitbar is the representative of those courtiers who want to gain through underhand means, and who wish to curry favour with their masters by not saying the correct or honest things, but by telling them the things which their masters want them to say. Fiddoo, the barber, is the embodiment of all those who have always held an inferior status in society, but whose craving to be one step higher always goads them to be unscrupulous, though they are too cowards not to follow any but a mean and sneakish course. The mother of Ranu is imbued with the feeling that right should always triumph over wrong, even though her own son has to pay the maximum price. Ranu's wife, Shukra, is typical of the Duggar women who love their husbands more than they love anything else. Even the ordinary peasants and farmers have not been ignored: they too find their share in the play and earn our sympathy. It is these qualities which give the play a universal appeal.

The play does not deal with unrelieved gloom, for then it would have become a mere horror-piece. On the other hand, one gets the feeling that the night will be pierced by a new light, and tyranny would be overthrown by the nobility of human spirit. Bangi, who perpetrates cruelties over the innocent beings, and contrives the murder of Sarpanch Ranu—the arbitrator—is visited by the retributive powers of Nemesis: he suffers from leprosy and dies a wretched death.

The play has an appropriate title, for Ranu is murdered because it is as an arbitrator that he decides the case of the division of property in Chaudhri's favour. It also serves a useful purpose in highlighting once again the role and significance of the Panchayat system in the present-day world. The songs are purposeful and serve to connect the various sequences.

The true test of a play, however, is neither songs nor dialogues, but it is the art of impersonation. Sarpanch makes not only an impressive reading but it produces a tremendous impact upon the audience. It has been staged in all the blocks of Jammu, Udhampur and Kathua districts. It has racy and crisp dialogues, lively humour, spiced with ironic remarks, and the language is muscular. Even such an inaccurate expression as 'mââr göli', for there were no guns some eight centuries ago, does not detract from the real merits of 'Sarpanch', and it is unquestionably the best play written so far in Dogri.

Dinoo's next venture into the domain of drama was 'Sanjâli'. This play deals with the theme of Co-operation. Dinoo is in the Panchayat Department, and he under-

stands the problems of the villagers. Being a reformist, he shows to the villagers (in this play) the best and the shortest way to prosperity. The play deals with the Sahukar who opposes changes, but who is converted in the end to the viewpoint of doing good through joint and co-operative efforts.

'Sanjāli,' unlike its predecessor 'Sarpañch,' is not an impressive performance. Dinoo has become so much engrossed with the figure-work and the economics of co-operatives that he loses sight of the main ingredient of drama—action—with the result that it becomes an insipid affair. Another defect of the play is that Dinoo Bahi has introduced into it the film atmosphere, which makes it more romantic than the situation warrants. The love of the Sahukar's daughter for Rattan, the intrigues of Shaukar and Patwari, the arrest and release of Rattan through the intervention of Sahukar's daughter, are familiar situations to the cine-goers, and which only falsify the real position. Dinoo's explanation is only partially convincing that co-operative movement does not really exist, and, therefore, only such a twist could give the people some idea of the Co-operatives.

And unless Dinoo revises the play to make it shorter, reduce the number of its 'dramatis personae' and polishes its dialogues so that it acquires a new directness and intensity, it will be a poor successor to his masterpiece, 'Sarpañch'.

Dinoo has also written a Hindustani play, 'Swarg Ki Khōj.'

Dehrī by Ram Kumar Abrol. After his collaboration with Ram Nath Shastri and Dinoo Bhai Pant in the play *Nāmā Grān*, Ram Kumar Abrol wrote a Dogri play, *Dehrī*.¹ Earlier, he had tried his hand even in writing an Urdu play, *Aur Insān Jēet Gaya*.

The characteristics of Ram Kumar Abrol, which are to be found in his short-stories, are seen even in this play. As a matter of fact, *Dehrī* is an elaboration of the theme, situations and even characters of *Gāirtū dā Mūll*, a short-story by Abrol himself.¹ The theme of *Gāirtū dā Mūll* owes something in its atmosphere to *Nāmā Grān*, but what Ram Kumar has expressed in a narrative form in *Gāirtū dā Mūll*, he has expressed that in a dialogue form in *Dehrī*. The result is that the reader gets an idea that Abrol repeats himself.

The technique which Abrol has applied from the stage-point of view is a clever one: it becomes very easy to act the play, and the youngman who comes to the village where *Dehrī* is situated is no other than the author himself. The stage requirements have been attended to. But whatever deficiencies one finds in Abrol's short-stories—inaccurate expressions, defective language, repetitions, bordering artificiality—are found in this play as well. Like *Ved Rahi's Dhārēn de Athrōō*, *Dehrī* also is shown to deal with the problem of Dohri, the system of unequal, reciprocal marriages. Being an actor himself, Abrol creates characters who are dominant in their appearance and manner, and they acquit themselves favourably on the stage.

But neither the theme nor its treatment warrants

1 *I āirēn De Nāshān*, 1959

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the death of Sham to be commemorated in the form of a Dehri where thousands of people, like pilgrims, throng to get peace of mind. Unlike Dinoo Bhai's 'Sarpañch,' Abrol's 'Dehri' fails to give its hero the place in the hearts of its readers or audience which Dinoo's Sarpañch, Data Ranu, gets. For as said earlier, the true test of a play is not its theme nor its dialogues, but impersonation. Abrol's hero, Sham, appears but a shadow before Dinoo Bhai's hero—Data Ranu. The repetition of 'Ke Akhdâ' by Mohitbar, even when it is not appropriate, does not appear to be the natural habit of Mohitbar to use his pet sentence so much as it betrays the mind of Ram Kumar Abrol who wants to type his characters in an easy-to-remember fashion; it also shows the practice of drawing upon the older style as exhibited in 'Namâ Grân': Mōorkh Kūsâ Pâse dâ, and in 'Sarpañch': Mâr Gōlî.

Ram Kumar Abrol is an idealist in his writings, and as such he believes in the study and expression of black and white contrasts. Due to good acting, this passes off well on the stage, but it cannot convince the readers of such white and black contrasts in actual life. Hence it is that 'Dehri' is unable to achieve a pre-eminence as a great writing, although there are some tense situations and some tender moments in the play.

Abrol is an untiring writer. He writes and rewrites and improves upon his earlier writings. His steps falter but he does not stop. And this trait in him is a hopeful sign that the future writings of Abrol will be free from such lapses, where his subjective element of a good, dominant actor tries to reduce the others to mere pigmies.

NOVEL

As in other literatures of the world, so also in Dogri, Novel was the last to emerge on the literary scene. And it has its reasons. Novel, more than any other form of literature, requires a fuller grasp over the details of life, a maturer vision and the extensive development of the resources of a language. Poetry, particularly, folk-poetry, always appears first in literature because it requires a brevity and pithiness. Prose needs greater time and space. But unlike short-story, which essentially deals with a single theme or situation or a particular aspect of life, novel demands greater knowledge and understanding; it deals with a much bigger canvas and involves a larger number of characters.

It is, therefore, heartening that Dogri, which saw the beginning of its real written literature some two decades ago, should also see the emergence of novel. It is as much a tribute to the genius of the language as to its writers. So far, three novels have been published, one each by Narender Khajuria, Ved Rahi and Madan Mohan Sharma. Two other novels, one each by Narendera Khajuria and Madan Mohan Sharma, are in the manuscript form. Shri D. C. Prashant has also been busy at writing a Dogri novel which is not complete yet and has got no title.

Prashant's style is journalistic ; he is a journalist by profession, and has seen almost all the areas of Jammu. He has moved among people and understands their traits, their moods and their language. In his

novel, he has tried to tackle the social problems facing the people; there is a sprinkling of politics, agriculture and religion, but the theme is essentially social. Prashant is visibly influenced by the Bengali writers, particularly Bankim Chander and Sharat Chander, and this novel owes quite a good deal to Sharat's 'Shri Kant'—the same type of atmosphere, the same type of characters, particularly Buâ, who resembles Rajya Laxmi; and the narrator himself is like the hero, Shri Kant. But Prashant sometimes is lost in his own ideas, overwhelmed by his own sentiments, and his grasp over his subject begins to fail, and details begin to lose their identity. But the whole can't be judged by a part, and we better wait for its completion before proceeding any further.

Narendra Khajuria. The three novels, 'Shânō by Narender Khajuria, 'Dhârân te Dhōōrân by Madan Mohan Sharma and 'Hâr, Bēr Te Pattan' by Ved Rahi deal with the present-day life and circumstances in the rural areas; taken as a whole, they present a broad and vivid picture of our villages and bring us face to face with many an ugly reality of our social set-up.

Narendra Khajuria's Shânō introduces us to an atmosphere where constructive efforts are being made for the rural uplift. The hero of the novel, Shanker, is a villager who has been in the army, and whose main assets are his courage and spirit of sacrifice. While trying to save a young child from an incoming train, Shankar loses his one leg. This incident is the beginning of all his troubles, but he is never sorry for the good he did; and the affection and love of his wife, Shano,

for her husbanda, lways solace him, and her courage doesn't allow him to droop in spirits.

Narendra's novel is an elaboration of his earlier short-stories, *Din Vâr* and *Dharatî dî Betî*, and its situations, and the atmosphere are all to be found therein—even the major characters are an elaboration of the main characters of the two stories, with the result that in *Shânô* we witness the strength and weakness which we have already witnessed in these short-stories; they are, as it were, inherent in the very structure of the novel.

The point which one has to remember about Narendra is his idealism, the contrast between what is and what should be. This idealism is liable to lead one to the extreme of propaganda, and unless the author is harsh to himself and exercises severe restraint on his ideas and sentiments, he is likely to emerge with bruises to the structure of the novel and to his feelings. This is what precisely happens in Narendra's case as well. There is a great deal of sentimentalism in the way in which Narendra deals with some very real and live issues. When it comes to lashing at fraud and exposing the shams of our society, Narendra's pen moves with a rare skill and gusto; but when it comes to finding solutions, his approach becomes rather wobbly. That's why he is most successful, not when he describes Shanker in a defiant mood, although that defiance is but rarely to be seen in him. His Snano, though the leading character of the novel, who also gives the novel its title, looks more like a saintly woman who has been depicted with all the virtues and no weaknesses, who

has overcome all her passions and anger, and who may be able to win many a person who is filled with sympathy for her, but who very seldom moves her readers. There is something cold in her attitude towards life, and her patience is sometimes annoying. But Narendra is at his best when he grapples with his villains: they become independent entities and assume a volition of their own. His language becomes muscular and a powerful vehicle to express his feelings. Narendra has seen such people and has met them; he is against them and he wants to fight them. But when it is Shano or Shankar, his hold seems to weaken because he is trying to be idealistic; he is painting them in white, who are opposed to black. But such characters are not very convincing because such pure white-and-black contrasts do not exist in life and such characters are not to be found. Their existence in actual life may be possible, but is not dramatically probable. And the solutions which Narendra suggests in his novel are what an idealist yearns for in his life, but they are not feasible because they do not simply happen. The novel ends on a very optimistic note: All was clear hence-forth' (Batt chanāin hī). This is an example of Narendra's mastery over his prose, but it also shows his smug and complacent belief that things were for the better after that. It's this end which leaves Shano's readers dissatisfied, for they know that the things are not so smooth even now, and it is not all moonlight and glow,—the paths are yet full of dim, dark patches, though not completely unrelieved by light and hope.

But to say this is not to detract from Shano's merits. The faults of locale in the novel—the

geographical boundaries are not clearly defined ; one vaguely guesses about the 'New Road' as the Udampur-Dhar road, but the reader is helped by his own intelligence rather than by Narendra's descriptions—are a common feature of Narendra's short-stories as well, and yet the story has an immense readability. One is quite prepared at times for the 'willing suspension of disbelief', and is drawn by the fast current of Narendra's prose. There is an economy of expression which is so refreshing after one extricates oneself from the wordy maze of Madan Mohan Sharma's novel. The language is faulty at places, because Narendra uses wrong idioms, but he never errs on the side of garrulity. The fool in the *Shânô* reminds us of poor Tom in 'Lear' : the similarity is purely accidental, for Narendra at the time he wrote his *Shânô*, was unaware of Shakespeare's great creation, but the philosophy of poor Tom is similar to that of Buddhoo in *Shânô*. He saves Shankar from ruining himself by drinking, just as poor Tom saves Gloucester from leaping unto his death.

Narendra has not stopped with *Shânô* ; he is busy with writing another novel '*Marōye dī Dālī*'. One can be sure that Narendra will try to be as much practical and realistic in his approach—unfortunately in *Shânô*, the denouement looks artificial—as the difficulties and hardships that he describes are real, and which are a bane of our social life.

Ved Rahi. The novels by Ved Rahi and Madan Mohan Sharma have significant titles : they are symbolic. In *Dhârân te Dhōṛān* (Peaks and Mists), *Dhârân* signify the natural grandeur, purity and strength of our land and its people, and *Dhōṛān*

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symbolise the mist and fog of feudalistic corruption and exploitation which envelop the mountain-peaks (people), and prevent them from standing in their natural glory (coming to their own).

In Ved Rahi's novel, Hâr Beṛi te Pattan, Hâr (flood) signifies the never-ending difficulties and hardships which the poor, particularly young women, who also happen to be beautiful, and children, who are heirs to some property, have to face. Men like Amroo and Jagtu, who are anti-social elements, perpetrate hardships and cruelties on the innocent people; the evil practice of such social customs as Dohri only strengthens their hands.

Beṛi (Boat) symbolises such people as are noble and kind-hearted and who, by trying to lend a helping hand to those in misery, bring beneficent results to them through their selflessness and self-sacrifice. Kunto, Sairoo and Mahesh act as a boat to people like Maya, Ranu and Chhallo who are beset with storms of misery. And the new forces of progressivism, which are favourable to the wind of reconstruction act as the haven (Pattan) for the storm-beset people who have reached safety after overcoming all the hurdles in their way.

The novel paints the village life : there is love and affection, there is love of land, but there are also greed and avarice, revenge and jealousy, evil social customs and sham and hypocrisy. In such a set-up, Jagtu's sympathy is as much harmful as his enmity is.

However this picture of the village life is not complete, for there is fun and mirth also in our villages ; it forms an integral part of our life, but

this is what we miss in this novel. The story deals with sad and tearful aspects and there is not much to relieve the pervading gloom. This lack of humorous details is a serious drawback of the novel, and takes away much of the interest which should have belonged to it.

Perhaps the greatest flaw of the novel is that there is no proper development of the characters: instead of being the round wholes, they are flat and stereotyped, who appear on the stage for sometime and then fade away or die. Most of them are defeatists by nature. Neither their characters nor any other issues stand out prominently in the book; in fact these should have been the main attractions of the novel.

The novel moves at a leisurely pace in the beginning and every detail is given out elaborately, but as the novel progresses, Ved Rahi seems suddenly to awaken to the feeling that it is growing discursive: the different strings which he has scattered all around should be collected; and he does it so hastily that the first half looks much bigger than the second half, and consequently more satisfying than the latter part.

The language of Ved Rahi's 'Hār, Beṛi te Pattan' is an improvement over the language of his short-stories; it's simpler, direct and idiomatic at places, but its essential weaknesses are the same as are found in the short-stories. He makes wrong usage of words and phrases, and confuses their genders, as for example:

1. Hūttan hōi gai for gayâ
2. 'Kūdrōōn' Pānī lai āa instead of 'kūteâ'
3. 'Jhūnak' can't be used in the sense of nap
—Page 5
4. 'Bhalōki' does not mean Bhōlī (simple-hearted)
and so on. (Page 60)

Nevertheless, the effort of Ved Rahi is a laudable one. In the matter of technique and craft, he is superior to both Narendra Khajuria and Madan Mohan Sharma; and to say this is to accept a lot.

Madan Mohan Sharma. If Ved Rahi's novel 'Hâr' Beṛi te Pattan' emphasises the [social aspect of our set-up, Maṛan Mohan Sharma's novel Dhârân Te Dhōōrân deals with its political aspects, and the new trends which the freedom movement has given rise to in our country, more so, in our villages. In 'Dhârân te Dhōōrân', we get a glimpse of the fast-fading feudalistic society, which looks healthy and robust to an outsider, but which, due to the hackneyed social customs, vices and hypocrisy, has grown hollow from within, and is disintegrating on account of its corrupt practices.

Madan Mohan has had a chance to live in the area of Ramkot, a small jagir, once ruled by a feudal lord. This is a beautiful region which is made ugly by the cruel feudalistic practices. The hero of the novel, Rasal Singh, is the protagonist of the new and rising forces of progressivism, but these forces are ineffective so long as the selfishness and the instinct to exploit are there in us;

they are further choked by the prevalent vice and corruption. The frustration of Rasal Singh in love unleashes the progressive forces which have the potentialities to wipe out all traces of wickedness and exploitation by the feudalists, but what about the inherent vices and selfishness of the common man? They insulate, as it were, the feudalists from the wrath of the progressive forces and delay their doom.

The same selfishness and exploitation thwart the wishes of Kamlo for a domestic life where there is love and affection. And when she fails in this, she no longer remains the mistress of her ideas; she becomes a mere play-thing of the lust of wicked persons, and loses her identity. But the glitter of this empty existence is too much for her: for to live in it, she has to sacrifice all her natural instincts and desires, and kill all her aspirations and yearnings. It's a world where, if one wants to exist, one has to pervert all moral values, and existence here is a moral death by stages; if one wants to live, one has to get out of it.

Taro sees this more clearly than Kamlo does, for she has been living in this atmosphere for a longer period: she knows the hollowness of all this, for what glitters here is not gold but a mere tinsel. And, therefore, she becomes a symbol of womanhood who are full of hatred and revolt against this cruel and exploiting set-up. She knows that the life she leads will darken the future of her daughter, Biaso, and therefore, she must give this life up if she wishes Biaso to lead a normal life; she must die if she wishes her daughter to

live. And because she rises above her circumstances, she becomes greater than they are.

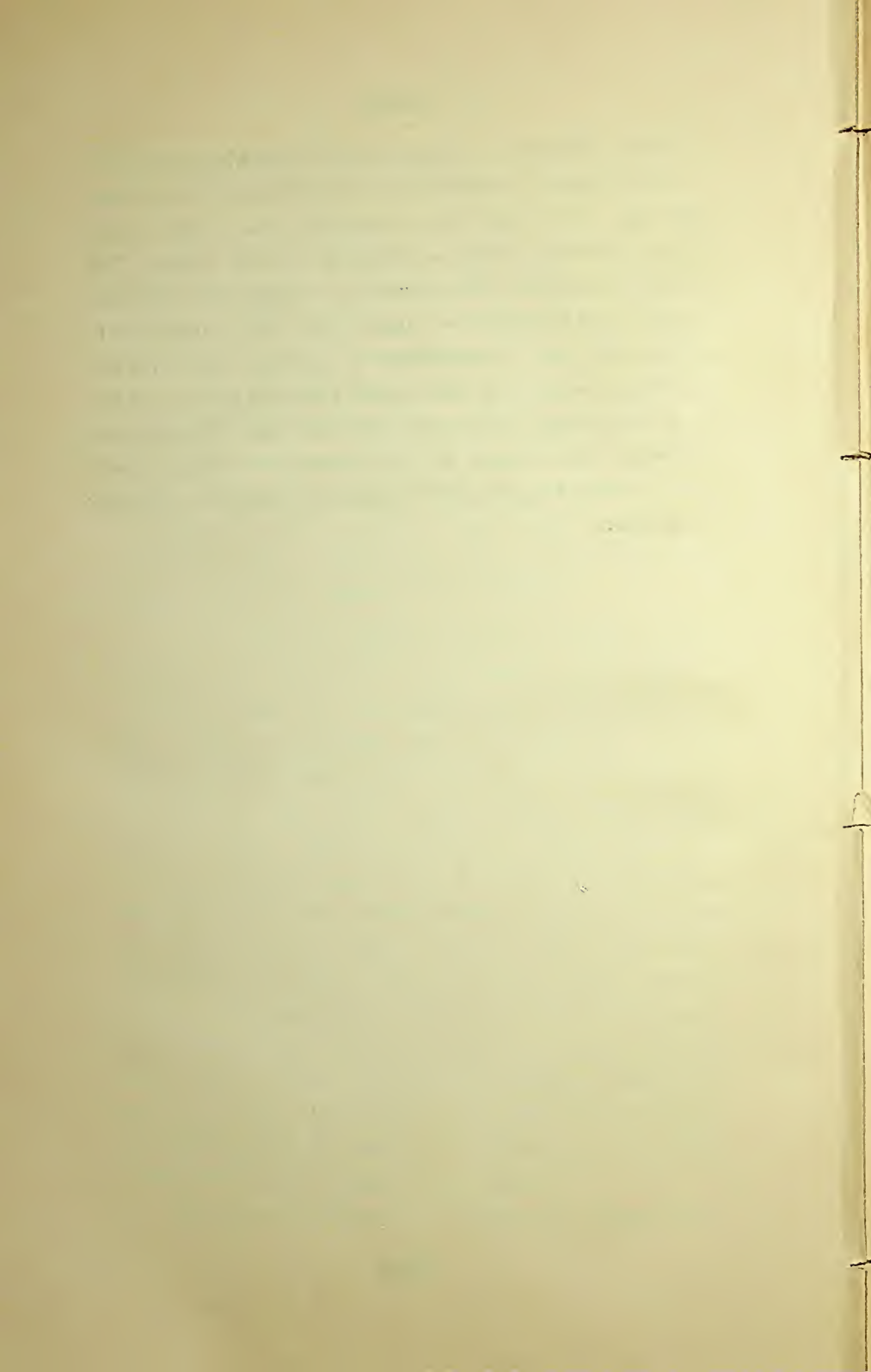
But Madan Mohan is too practical to gloss over the things or find a short-cut. The fight against feudalism is bitter and long-drawn, and the feudalists are too well-aware of the short-comings of the demagogues not to exploit them. The scene where a party of artists comes from the city is a vivid exposure of the none-too-strong opportunists, for whom what matters most is their 'halwa-manda'. Madan Mohan warns the people that all their efforts will be thwarted and their sacrifices shall come to nought, if in order to oust the feudalists, they entrust their lot to such selfish and unscrupulous elements.

Unlike Narendra Khajuria, Madan Mohan shows a strong sense of his locale ; his scene is firmly laid in a definite place, but he spoils much of his effect by his repetitious sentences; the circumlocution of his short-stories is present even in his novel ; this betrays his habit of mind which revels in going round and round a maze. However, the gusto with which his narration moves sometimes leaves his readers breathless, and this is truly a remarkable quality. The day-dreaming of Kamlo in the novel reminds one of the day-dreaming in his short-story, entitled 'Khirlâ Mânû', and in such descriptions Madan Mohan is positively above average; he is able to bring out the intangibles of the human heart, and give a coherent expression to some vague yearnings. His sense of humour is also exhibited in the scene where the party of artists is shown talking to people in a shop.

As the story progresses, it begins to appear that

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Madan Mohan is losing control over his material; his sense of detail is beginning to diminish and he wants to get away from it as soon as he can. This results in unnecessary haste and blurring of the effects. The end, therefore, looks more like a cheap movie-thriller, where the tricks of the camera are freely employed to heighten the atmosphere of mystery and tragedy. Unfortunately, the end doesn't convince and the readers remain visibly unaffected and unmoved. The intended tragedy never comes off; it becomes a confused battle of persons triggering off without any conscious purpose or effect.



PART

IV

THE

POSTSCRIPT

Considerable time has elapsed between the writing of the present volume and its actual publication. During this period of three years and more, important social and political changes inside and outside the state have taken place. The most significant of them all was the Chinese aggression, and the most painful was the sudden demise of Shri Jawahar Lal Nehru.

Dogri literature, because it is rooted in the soil, has been responsive to the developments taking place in our country, and the poets and the writers have expressed the important events in their writings. Not to have included them in the present volume would have not only been unfair to Dogri literature but even to myself, and, therefore, I felt that they must all be mentioned in the Postscript.

Moreover, at the time I finished the present volume, some writers were writing in poetry or prose, and had exhibited great promise in their writings; but who, by the force of circumstances, have had to leave Jammu, and who afterwards gave up writing in Dogri. Randhir Singh has joined Air Force, and has not added anything more to whatever little he had written earlier. The same is true of Madho Singh, who had written some prose-pieces, but his duties in the Army perhaps do not allow him any time to pen his ideas in Dogri. Padma and Deep have quarrelled, and they have been judicially separated. Padma is at present employed in the Dogri section of All India Radio, New Delhi, and the distance of about 365 miles is not a small distance, even in this age of spaceships, in so far as the writing of Dogri is

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concerned ; for there is no climate for Dogri in Delhi. Not that Padma has stopped writing poetry altogether. On the other hand, in *Sârâ Sâhitya* (1963), two of her poems have been published which she wrote in Delhi (Pages 18—21). They show that her vision has grown wider, her control over metre has matured, and yet one feels that her language, though it has a richness and feminine quality, it has also started accepting influences from other languages. Her approach has become more sentimental, even full of self-pity. The reason is not far to seek, but here we are concerned with the effects and not their causes. The quantity of poems which she is writing in Dogri has also decreased considerably.

But Padma's loss seems to be Deep's gain. This emotional shock has opened the flood-gates of Deep's poetry. There is deep frustration in some of the ghazals he has written; in some there is bitterness and self-pity, but, as the time is passing, he seems to be getting a firm grasp over his ideas, and expressing them in a suppressed, but deeply moving, style. There is in them a desire not to be very subjective, not to sit on a higher pedestal and judge, but to understand himself and others. It's a pity Deep does not write more of such ghazals, and whatever he has written, he has not taken the trouble of publishing them.

One had expected, when one read Kavi Rattan's short-stories, that with the passage of time, sentimentalism would disappear from his writings, but instead — and it almost appears ironic—he has disappeared completely from the literary scene of Dogri. And yet it would have appeared unfair not to have mention-

ed in the earlier portion that Kavi Rattan also wrote short-stories.

Three more short-story writers have emerged on the literary scene : one of them disappeared as soon as it was known that he had potentialities. He was D. R. Swarnkar, who was killed in a bus-accident near Sudh Mahadev some three years ago. His 'Nehrâ te Sawerâ' (Sârâ Sâhitya, 1960-62), is almost autobiographical ; it showed that Shri Swarnkar had a sensitive heart, a keen eye to perceive the things around himself, and the felicity to express them in an artistic manner. He has written two or three more stories, but the 'fair pledge' which he seemed to be, was plucked before long, and a promising career came to a sudden halt.

Charan Singh has also written some short-stories. One of them, 'Kalpanâ' has been published in 'Sârâ Sâhitya' (1960-62). It shows the grasp of Charan Singh over Dogri, but also the conflict in his mind, which must have been present in the mind of every young poet, writer or artist at one time or the other, when he is uncertain which one should he prefer—art or bread. There is a veiled autobiographical reference, but Charan Singh has not allowed his theme to become an exercise in sentimentality.

With the publication of books by Dogri Sanstha, Dogri Mandal, publishers and the Cultural Academy, some readership has been created. Cultural Academy is proving very useful in giving a fillip to the different languages of the State by undertaking the publication of books, by giving subsidy to the authors to publish

their books, by instituting awards for the best books and plays (scripts). The result has been that good literature has come before us in ample quantity. Narendra's 'Us bhâg jagâne âle ân,' Shambu Nath Sharma's 'Râmâyan' and Madhukar's 'Eh Dhōlâ Kūn Thapyâ'—each won the first prize; and Dinoo's 'Sarpañch', and Ram Lal Sharma's 'Kiran' has each won the second prize. Narendra's play 'Dhauñdiyân Kañdân' has won the second prize. The holding of these competitions by the Academy, the holding of Mushairas by the Information Department, Radio Kashmir, Jammu and the Cultural Academy, and very recently, the Sham-i-Afsana, have created a greater enthusiasm and urge in the people to write in Dogri. Now, more and more people have started writing in Dogri, and more of them have become known to us. The contacts between Jammu and the rural areas have been mutually beneficial. Moreover, the contacts between Jammu and Kangra and Dharamshala have also proved useful in so far as they have enabled us to know that some people there are who, too, are writing in Dogri, and that if proper interest is taken, and proper approach made, the literary movement in Dogri will get a shot in the arm. But first thing should come first.

Translations. One of the best ways of enriching the literature of a language is to translate into it the good and great books of other languages. During the Tagore Centenary celebrations, Tagore's *Gitânjalī* was translated by R. N. Shastri, 'Ekōtrashatī' (101 poems) by K. S. Madhukar, and *Ekkī Kahāñiyāñ* (21 stories) by Ved Rahi. These have been published into Dogri by the State Cultural Academy. In addition, Shastri

translated Tagore's 'Sactifice' into Dogri.

It was Tagore's 'Gītāñjali' which introduced him to the literary world outside India in the real sense, and made Tagore the first, and the only Indian, to get the Nobel Prize for literature. Tagore has indirectly borrowed a lot from the famous mystic poet, Kabir, but whatever Tagore borrowed, he gave it a peculiar treatment and made it his own. The flights of his imagination, singing and soaring at the same time, are something unique; and to reproduce them into Dogri is a challenge which is both fascinating and disturbing. And it must be said to Shastri's credit that he accepted the challenge and met it with a fair degree of success. Temperamentally, Shastri and Madhukar are the two poets in Dogri who are most suited to translate Tagore into Dogri. There is in Shastri a balance between the emotional and the intellectual aspects, and to translate Gītāñjali into Dogri, this balance was needed so that readers could get a fair idea of Tagore's personality and art. And, therefore, even after Shastri had rendered Gītāñjali into Dogri, his style remained essentially the same, which was his before he started work on Gītāñjali.

This cannot, however, be said about Madhukar. He went to the source and drank deep into it. He did not depend entirely on the translation of Tagore into Hindi or Urdu or Punjabi, but learnt, to some extent, Bengali, so that he could recapture essentially the spirit of Tagore. And it can be said that in this Madhukar surpassed the two other translators of Tagore into Dogri—Shastri and Ved Rahi. There is the same

gushing lyricism, the same heavenly flight, the same music which one associates with the poetry of Tagore. Madhukar, so does it appear, merged his personality into Tagore's, and when he emerged, he was dyed in the same colours. This is as much a tribute to Madhukar's genius as a criticism of his later poetry, for what was expected of Madhukar was not to lose his identity but to retain it even if he were to translate the 'Ekōtrashatī' of Tagore. And though he did a monumental service to Dogri by his translation of 'Ekōtrashatī' to many readers, he was not the same old Madhukar after he had finished his rendering of the Ekōtrashatī. This was perhaps natural also. Madhukar is sensitive and emotional, and he felt that to translate Tagore's poetry, it would be better to submerge his intellectual self into his emotional self. It is because of this that his rendering of the Ekōtrashatī is more satisfying than Shastri's Gitāñjalī. But whereas Shastri retained his individuality and style, Madhukar could not. And this can be seen in many of his poems which he has included in his collection, 'Dōlā Kūn Thappā'. There is music, there is imagination, soaring higher and higher; there is the sweep and richness of language, but he seems sometimes to be overwhelmed by his ideas and tempted to express them, even though they are sometimes vague and recondite, and not so concrete.

Ved Rahi's translation of Ekkī Khāniyān suffers from the defects which the translation of a translation—'copy of a copy twice removed from truth'—suffers. The translation seems to have been done in a hurry, but he has not allowed either the sense or the personality of Tagore to be distorted in any way. The literary

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excellence is lacking, but even then the translation, as it is, is a valuable addition to the volume of Dogri prose.

Even before the translation of Tagore's 'Gitanjali,' 'Ekōtrashati', and 'Ekkī Kahāniyāin' into Dogri, the Gītā had been translated—or rather rendered—into Dogri by Shri Paras Ram Nagar, Thakur Raghunath Singh Samyal and Professor Gauri Shankar. Not that the translations were completely satisfying; in a way the predilections and moods of the individual translator had crept in his translation, but that the above-mentioned gentlemen had accepted the challenge to render the difficult Gītā into Dogri showed that a stage had been reached when Dogri could be employed for doing bigger tasks than it had been hitherto expected or employed to do. Shri Nagar's Gita is more imbued with Bhakti-ras; Thakur Samyal's with the vigour and force of language, and Professor Gauri Shankar's is a balance between the devotional aspect of Shri Nagar and the vigour of Thakur Samyal.

And then there were the translations of Pañch tantra by Shri Anant Ram Shastri, and the Shataks of Bharatrihari by Professor Ram Nath Shastri. Their translations did not have the complete excellence of the originals, but then the Sanskrit language was infinitely richer, and admitted of greater manipulation than the scantily-resourceful Dogri could fully exploit. And the task was all the more difficult when beginning was to be made in the field of translation.

But by the time Shri Shambu Nath Sharma decided to render 'The Rāmāyāna' into Dogri, the

resources of Dogri had considerably expanded. Even otherwise, temperamentally, Shri Shambu Nath was more suited to undertake such a venture. Moreover, his long associations with the stage had stood him in good stead. He was better equipped to render the dramatic portions in a style which would suit the original, and the emphasis on the proper delivery of a word or the expression of the verbal felicity or melody of a passage so necessary for the stage, proved equally useful to Shambu Nath in capturing the various moods of the whole passages in the 'Râmâyana'. Hence it is that on reading the Dogri version, one gets a glimpse of the very spirit of the 'Râmâyana'— the joy and ecstasy, the sorrow and pain, the suspense and mystery, the moods of bravery, and the descriptions of marriage of Rama to Sita, of the battle-scenes, of the triumphant return of Rama to Ayodhia, the scenes of welcome, the anguish of Rama at forsaking Sita and many more are truly great. The felicity of expression, the sonorous descriptions and the dignified style of Shri Shambu Nath's have helped him in producing a real piece of art.

Children's Literature. And Shri Sham Lal's rendering of 'Tales from the Bhāgvat' and Bâitâl Pacchīs into Dogri are not only an addition to the Dogri translation ; they are a valuable contribution to the literature for children, of which there was a great paucity in Dogri. The style of Shri Sham Lal, like that of Shakti Sharma, is didactic ; and because both are teachers essentially, their didacticism is neither pompous nor does it sit heavy on the readers. It has a simplicity and directness which readily convey them-

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selves to the younger minds. And yet the main theme of either the 'Bhâgvat' or the 'Bâitâl Pacchîsî' is not destroyed, although the finer intricacies and the vastness of their originals are lacking.

While talking of the Dogri literature for children, Narnedra Khajuria's collection of plays, 'Us bhâg jagâne âle ân,' and another of his short-stories, 'Rôchak Kahâniyân' need also to be mentioned. Narendra Khajuria was a teacher and he makes a conscious effort to make himself intelligible to his students. The themes of the plays or the stories are those which can be easily understood and believed by young boys and girls; they are consequently more impressed by them than they would ordinarily be by loud phrases or abstract passages. His plays or stories are written in a language which is forceful and direct, and sometimes his style has a pungency and satire which are quite effective, though the qualities of great literature are lacking in these two collections.

Dogri Poetry and Chinese. Aggression. The intervening period between 1950 and 1962—after the first flush of Pakistani aggression had subsided and before the massive Chinese attack on India—was the period of the flowering of the genius of Dogri literature. It had resulted in the diversification of the topics on which poetry had hitherto been written; at the same time, the real prose literature was produced for which the writers had made conscious efforts. The patriotic poems were written but in a sporadic manner; and only, when the Centenary of the Indian Mutiny was being celebrated in 1957, a collection of patriotic poems was published. The poems were generally good,

but they were written mainly to fulfil a certain obligation, rather than as an expression of the deeper urges of the poets who wrote them.

This, however, was not the case when the country was suddenly invaded by the Chinese on the 20th October, 1962. The country's integrity had been violated ; people's confidence in the eternal friendship of India and China—'Hindi-Chini Bhai Bhai'—had received a severe jolt, and the cult of 'Panch Sheel' had been smothered by one of its main proponents. The blow was too sudden not to daze the people ; and yet the blunt fact was that the Chinese had bloodied India's nose, and we had been found the weaker, much weaker than we knew and the Chinese had suspected.

There were scenes of unprecedented dedication to the cause of the country. An average Indian, a worker, a labourer, an old, poor woman, a shoe-shine boy, a beggar, a babu working in a private firm, a bank or a government office, reacted wonderfully to the new situation created by the Chinese menace. But what about the big business, the big industrialist, the monopolist or the so-called leaders, both in the ruling party and the opposition ? Corruption and back-market, profiteering, hoarding, smuggling and adulteration, had become rampant in the country ; they showed that the degeneration of all the finer sentiments was complete and the old values,—which could be witnessed before Independence—had been corroded by the self-seeking politicians and the money-grabbing businessmen and industrialists. And to crown it all, a new class of upstarts, who believed in get-rich-quick

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by unscrupulous means, had also sprung up.

The country had been badly let down, but the people's faith in Shri Jawahar Lal Nehru and in their country was so tremendous that they tended to forget all the ugly aspects of the situation. They liked to believe themselves as soldiers all, working in the fields, in the factories and in the offices, working with their hands, with their implements, instruments and weapons.

But there were other soldiers too, who fought the enemy with the aid of their pens, who exhorted their countrymen to rise to meet the challenge of the aggressor. The Hindi poet, Shambunath Singh, then gave a call 'Faulaâd dhale factoryiyōñ mein,' and the Urdu poet, Jan Nissar Akhtar said, 'Awâz dō hum ek hāin.' And yet another thundered :

'Wattan kī âbrōō khatre mein hai, hōshiâr hō jāō.'

And many more sang, exhorted and thundered in the regional languages of India.

So did the poets of Dogri. There was sincerity in what they wrote on the Chinese invasion, but not that force, born out of conviction, that we will be the winners, which was in evidence in their poems soon after the Pakistani attack. The reason was not far to seek. The Pakistani attack was long expected, for there were interminable and long-drawn ideological differences and their method of expression was also overt and clear, and their targets too nearly touched our homes and hearths. Moreover, vis-i-vis Pakistan, we were a superior military power, both in the matter of numbers and weapons. Nor had the subversion of

values taken place: the idealism which the movement for independence had generated, though it had become dim and tarnished after the communal frenzy, it had not, after all, completely been replaced by sheer opportunism, hunger for power and lust for money. The poets knew whom they were fighting and what they were fighting for. They were arrayed against a foreign aggressor, but not against an enemy inside. Their objective was distinct and their path clear.

But the Chinese had created a problem for many of them. It was not so easy for some to believe that China, a socialist country, could ever attack any country; for those who believed in 'Hindi-Chini Bhai Bhai,' it was not an easy job to overcome the shock caused by the open hostility of China for India. Moreover, the invasion was so sudden that it hardly gave any time to the people—and to the poets as the mouth-piece of the people's sentiments—to collect their ideas and express them cogently.

One thing more. Unlike Pakistan, China was not militarily an inferior power to India. On the other hand, during the hey-day of India-China friendship, some people were never tired of recounting the brave deeds of the Chinese soldiers and China's military might. Knowing this so well, it was not so easy for them to write of China as they could of Pakistan. And then the enemy within, which was not so much in the form of political supporters of China, as in the form of self-seekers, corrupt and inefficient people. How to fight at two fronts? Only men with proper understanding of the political scene and broader vision of life could

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have squarely faced the issue. Hence it is that the approach of quite some poets is one-sided and wobbly; it does not grapple with the issue proper. To say that we are weaker than China is, might have been true but not patriotic; and to say that we would throw the Chinese out in a trice, would be a mere slogan-mongering or wishful thinking, but it would not have any basis in reality.

Such was, therefore, the dilemma of the Indian people, and the poets. Sahir had aptly captured that mood of predicament: 'Wōh jin kō bhāi keh kar ham ne sēene se lagāyā thā. Wattan dūshman darīndōn ke liye talwār hō jāō'.

And he uttered a note of warning as well: 'Let's beware no tyrant fills his coffers, no black-marketer profiteers at the cost of the people; let not history reproach us for our greed and remissions in the fateful hour of national crisis.' But how many of our poets could capture this twin-mood of defiance of the enemy and warning against the saboteurs? This was the basic problem and not all the poets either understood it or tried to face it. At the best, most of them alluded to the past glorious deeds of the warriors like Arjun, Karan, Rana Pratap, Shiva ji, and Tipu Sultan. This was done to encourage and inspire, but didn't it also amount to a flight to the past, and an escape from the present? Where could we see the spontaneity which we saw in the poems of Dinoo, Deep, Yash, Shastri, Samailpuri, and others at the time of Pakistani aggression? Only Padma Sharma seems to recapture that spirit when she sings in her Gēet, 'Batten de bich', Page 18, lines 1 - 6, 'Des Payār de Gēet', Ed. by K. S.

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Madhukar. This reminds us of the poems of Dinoo and Yash, written in the form of dialogues between man and woman, brother and sister. Unlike the previous occasion, Deep is vague and evasive this time, and quite understandably so. This is clear from his poem 'Merâ Des,' Page 34, lines 1 - 5 of 'Des Payâr De Gēēt.' And Tara Samailpuri has tried to sing the virtues of peaceful pursuits, and condemned chauvinism and armed conflict among nations in his yet unpublished poem. The poems of Shri Ram Kishan Shastri, 'Chīn,' (page 20 of Des Payâr De Gēēt), that of Shri Durga Dutt Shastri, 'Desâ Dâ Mân Vadânâ' (page 12, Ibid), and of Shri Shayam Dutt 'Prag' Azâdī Dī Jōt,' though not lacking the sincerity of emotions, are nothing but mere rhetoric. A line here or a phrase there is quite appealing, but on the whole, they are only meant to convince themselves, without convincing others, that we can face up to China.

This predicament is truly pathetic and painful, for who doesn't want, if he is true to the salt of the land, that the Chinese aggressors be thrown out of the Indian soil? But can we really, by talking merely of our glorious past? Why should we shy away from the hard realities of life, the complex pattern of world politics; for though we need to prepare for war, we talk philosophically of peace; though we veer round to a particular bloc according to the exigency of the situation, we talk of non-alignment? Perhaps, but for this national confusion, or dichotomy of our words and deeds, as the Chinese would say, China would not have dared to attack us. And the poets, like the true patriots, also sang of throwing out the

Chinese. But just as the words of the leaders only partially satisfied the people, so did the majority of poems written after the Chinese invasion. Only poets like Jan Nissar Akhtar, who truly portrayed the potentialities of the Chinese menace to the whole Indian Nation, or Sahir Ludhianvi, who would not be afraid of exposing the supporters of the Chinese, in the form of hoarders and black-marketers, could write really great and convincing patriotic poetry. And hence it is that though the poem Sōhgān (page 3 of Des Payār De Geēt), by Shri Krishen Samailpuri is a fine lyric, his Qawwālī, (Page 1, Ibid) seems to have been written more with a view to setting it on a pleasant tune than really caring for fine poetry,

Even Madhukar cannot rise to the old heights of
'Jhōōth naīññ ākhā meri gallā ch Sachāī aī,

Dīndā Itihās merī gāvāī aī in which he had recounted the details which had led to the slavery of India. The poem was forceful though the approach was rather reactionary. One has only to compare Madhukar's this poem with his poem Sādā Sōhāgan Dhartī (Page 29, Ibid), or 'Geet' (Page 32, Ibid) to see the difference.

Parma Nand 'Almast' has almost sacrificed the brave spirit of his patriotic poem, Lalkār (Page 25, Ibid), to the trivial effect of producing musical qualities, as is evident from the use of such words as 'bandōōkrōō' for bandōōk (gun), 'kambalōō for kambal', gēetōō, etc. Only, unconsciously, Almast alludes to what he and others should have openly said—the spirit of lethargy, ease and complacency which had been slowly overtaking

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the Indian nation without their being conscious of it. The words are significant : 'Manayân gull hūn hull bai hull' (Ibid, Page 26 : Listen to me now, and act, without being inert). Towards the end, Almost gathers momentum :

'Desâ under kōi bairi khāiri

Ambi Jaichand kōi raun niñ denâ';

but then he again loosens his grip, and slips to triviality :

Mōyen de mūnden dī mālâ banâge,

Almastâ dī jit fī kaidī ai hââr.'

(Ibid, Page 28)

Shri Charan Singh, in his poem 'Kindh' (Ibid, Page 16) looks to another aspect of the situation ; perhaps we are becoming disheartened and defeatist :
Utthō, Utthō... ..

Himmat, hauslâ, Des ki Hârī jâ dâ.'

Why should we be disheartened ? We have had a glorious past ; we should rise again and perform the deeds which befit us, as the descendants of world's great heroes and warriors.

Shri Ram Lal Khajuria strikes a much healthier and more robust note. We have always loved peace, have suffered for it ; we have striven hard for promoting India-China friendship. But if China sullies the name of friendship and stabs us in the back, why should we be ashamed of our policy of peace, of our efforts to befriend China ; why should we feel dismayed and disheartened ? China perhaps is unaware of our achievements in the battle-field ; Chinese perhaps are unaware of the terrible consequences which flow from war. We know the consequences of blood-

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shed, and, therefore, we wanted to avoid it (Ibid, page 8, 'Chetavnī' poem). But if China wants war, we are prepared for it. We don't covet others' territory, but we shall not wince from defending what is ours; nor shall we fail to fight aggression. We refuse to be paralysed by the deception and fraud played by the Chinese, and shall strengthen our defences so that no potential aggressor dare cast an evil eye on our territory (Ibid, Poem 'Hūbb', Page 10-11).

Dinoo Bhai Pant diagnoses the malady the nation is suffering from. We had become too self-satisfied and complacent, resting on our laurels: this attitude has been our undoing in the past also—the brave Yadavs were ruined by their own selfishness and quarrels over trivialities. But we should not bemoan all this. This jolt is good if it shakes us off our lethargy and smugness. This life is purposeful only if it is lived in the service of our country, in the well-being of its people. We must, therefore, feel grateful to the enemy who has awakened us from the death-like sleep. The true sons of the soil are those who are willing to sacrifice their all for the defence and integrity of their country. They never die, and are like a flame immortal to light the paths of others. And that hour is sacred indeed when the sons of the soil realise their true responsibility (Ibid 'Pūnn Gharī', Pages 23-24). The spirit of this exhortation is similar to the one when Henry V realises the odds against him and yet prefers to fight: 'For who that lives this day shall live for ever.'

In his 'Pad Tippīnī,' Page 15, published in Chalō Sīpāhī Chalō, the famous Hindi poet 'Dinkar' says,

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what Dinoo has said in Dogri, that the real fronts are not in the battle-field alone, but also in the fields, in the shops and the bazars. Sloth and laziness are the real misfortune of the country.

But all said, Dinoo's 'Pūnn Gharī' though it grapples with the real problem, it cannot affect us with the same intensity as his earlier poems do, because Dinoo in this poem feels not so much with his heart as much as he feels with his intellect.

Professor Ram Nath Shastri also touches the real issue. It's no time for us to talk, but it is time to act, for we cannot defeat the enemy by only talking too much (Ibid, Page 4, Ajj Hamâlâ khatre Ch Aī). It is only in the hour of crisis that we can know who the real patriots are, and who pay only lip-service to their country : there are Indian Indians and Chinese-Indians. It is the sacrifice which keeps the nations alive. India is one country, and if a part of it is attacked, it is an attack on the whole country (Ibid, Pages 5-6).

So what is needed is a new mobility, a new outlook which can cope with the changed circumstances. Himalya is no longer the sentry, the guard of yore, its walls have been pierced by the Chinese infidels. We have now to build a new Himalya, which is firm and impregnable, with our courage and determination ; but also with new and strong armed forces, equipped with the means of defence by which we can repel the Chinese aggression.

And, therefore, the war is on. Yash, Spolia, Param Chand Premi and others have also written on

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the Chinese aggression. And if their poems are less satisfying to the mind, it is not entirely their fault. The issues have become more complex and the national policy has not been very clear or united. Ideological affiliations or political affinities have only helped to confuse an average Indian, for whereas he knows his duty towards his country, he does not know the mind of the leaders of political parties. If the country belongs to all, will the big business, the industrialists and the like also renounce their selfishness and policy of self-aggrandisement, and prefer the country's interest to their own? And if they do, there is no doubt about the final outcome. And when such is the climate of opinion and action, the poets know that what they are writing comes straight from the heart and reaches others' hearts; and that it neither confuses them nor leaves them inert. When the voice of the poet joins the voice of the people, there will be a vast concourse which will prove to be the death-knell of all the enemies of the country.

Prose. Shri D. C. Prashant's book, 'ōōchīyāñ dhārāñ', a collection of short-stories, is a mixture of the old and the new, of the conventional style and the new trends. Prashant is a journalist, and he wants to create an interest in the readers about what he writes. His approach is that of a writer who writes historical novels or historical pieces, but whose use of the historical material is arbitrary. Prashant is so many things in one: a psychologist, a descriptive writer, a historian, a sentimentalist; and these lend Prashant his strength and result in his weakness. At times, there is an unnecessary emphasis upon the trivial details, sometimes, certain things are unnecess-

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arily repeated; and sometimes fiction is dressed in the guise of history. But there is also at times a directness, a rich prose style, a clever plot, an atmosphere to which very few Dogri writers pay much attention. And when it comes to glancing back into the past, delving into its mysteries, and presenting its terrible aspects, Prashant is very seldom equalled by other short-story writers in Dogri. Prashant piles detail upon detail in order to convince his readers about the veracity of what he is writing. But this trait is beset with certain difficulties, for there is always the risk of overdoing, and there is no doubt that he overdoes frequently. His romantic bent of mind leads him to the awkward paths, where a writer, endowed with the commonsense which Prashant possesses, will hardly venture, but then Prashant is dictated more by his feelings than by his reason.

On reading his stories, one wonders why Prashant can't curb his exuberant nature and sentimental and romantic traits; for whereas there is interest in his story and plot, there is also a slipshod prose-style, no proper sense of the prose-period, lack of grasp over his detail. Quite often, while reading Prashant, one is impressed by the atmosphere of suspense and mystery, terror and surprise which he builds with his details and descriptions: they remind one of Shri Bhagwat Prasad Sathe. But they have common failings too—it's perhaps their laziness to brush up everything and to be more careful about their details; a lack of will to be more harsh to their unnecessary sentimentalism and romantic flights. And when all this is said, there is still very much left in their stories to like and appreciate, and that is their readability. Prashant, like

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Sathe, is readable : Prashant is a more conscious artist, but Sathe has a greater control over his language. Prashant's 'Akhīrlī Bal' 'Nēclamā dā Bhet,' 'Mahur Garh dī kūñjī' are quite interesting stories, and so is his 'Chānchlō, published in Sārā Sāhitya by the Cultural Academy, (1960-62).

Prashant has also been bringing out a magazine of short-stories 'Rekhā,' in which he has published some more of his stories, and in these stories, Prashant stands before us: dramatic, journalistic, romantic and sentimentalist. And very recently he has read a paper on the 'Development of Dogri Prose' which is quite interesting, interspersed with very useful information and some unnecessary detail.

Shri Ram Kumar Abrol's 'Phūll Bane Angāre' shows him to have matured as an artist. The weakness of language is still there and so also his sentimentalism, but there is a greater technical skill in this collection of short-stories than in his earlier 'Pāireñ de Nishān.' Even the subject-matter is improved considerably and his canvas has become wider. His grasp of details is firmer than before, but not so firm as it should be. The imagery of Sābat ādmī is complex but quite convincingly described. The story 'Rāungle Hath' is interesting in parts. What becomes, jarring, however, is the repetitious use of the word 'jan', which shows not only the sub-conscious habit of Abrol to be more cautious, but also his lack of proper control over the precise use of the word, a lack of definiteness. Abrol can truly be a great story-writer in Dogri if he cultivates precision in detail, curbs his sentimental

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instincts and does not use stereo-typed expressions too often.

Shambu Nath Sharma and Ram Lal Sharma have also written some short-stories. Shambu Nath Sharma has pathos; Ram Lal Sharma wit and satire, but essentially they are poets. Dheru Mal, who unfortunately died too prematurely also wrote short stories, and one of them, *Nehrâ te Saverâ*, published in *Sârâ Sâhitya* is almost autobiographical. This can compare favourably with Ram Kumar Abrol's *Tâki Kûn Lâg*, published in 'Phûll Bane Angâre, 1963. It has pathos, it has pungency and satire, and it has a freshness; it is the more effective because it surprises by its direct but artistic handling of the situation.

Madan Mohan Sharma has published another collection of short-stories, '*Chânnî Râât*.' There is a welcome change in his style. Madan Mohan has matured with years. There is far less temptation to indulge in circumlocution, although the trait has not fully disappeared. Consequently, there is less of sentimentalism, for now he does not revel merely in his sentiments as he used to do earlier. His subject-matter is complex, but there is a deft handling of the situation; and there are some fine psychological touches with the result that his stories are more satisfying. His '*Lâltâinân*', published in *Sârâ Sâhitya*, Vol. I, 1960-62, proves that Madan Mohan is no longer a mere sentimentalist; and in the matter of technique and style, this story can stand by the side of some of the best stories in the other regional languages of India.

Ved Rahi has also added to the number of his Dogri short-stories. Although he is concentrating more upon writing in Hindi, his 'Eh Pahār Mere Nāīn' is really a good story in Dogri.

In prose, too, a number of good essays are being written and on diverse topics, like art, dance, folk-songs, criticism etc. Prominent among the writers are Shri Vishwa Nath Khajuria, Shri Sansar Chand Sharma, Shri Vidya Rattan Khajuria, Ram Nath Shastri, Smt. Shakti Sharma, Prashant, Anant Ram Shastri, Pt. Ganga Nath and others. The articles of some of them have been published in 'Sârâ Sâhitya, 1960-62,' and some in 'Sârâ Sâhitya, 1963.'

Shri Tara Samailpuri's 'Dōgri Kahâvat Kōsh,' a collection of about 1500 idioms with their translation or equivalents in Hindi, published by the State Cultural Academy, is also a useful book. It can give a reader an idea not only of the common sayings prevalent in Dogri, but, to some extent, of the manners and customs of the Dogras. It is a useful material for a linguist who is interested in the study and development of Dogri.

POETRY. A number of books in poetry have also been published. Ved Rahi has published all his Dogri poems and ghazals in 'the Yojnâ', a Hindi magazine, published by the Information Department of the State. Ved Rahi has a thoughtful and reflective style; his ghazals have a technical skill, but he lacks the richness and spontaneity of either Deep or Madhukar. Essentially, he is a prose-writer.

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Ram Kumar Abrol has also published some of his poems. He has written 'Merī Kavītā', Merī Kahānīyān'. He is evidently influenced by the style of Ram Nath Shastri, although his 'Tallēñ Kanneñ Saje dī eh Mūrāt' is indeed thought-provoking.

Ram Lal Sharma's 'Kiran' (1963) and Charan Singh's 'Jōt' (1964) also show the strides they have taken in the field of poetry. Both of them have lost their self-consciousness, and have acquired a sureness in their style; and Ram Lal Sharma has a firm grip on his subject-matter. One may not too readily agree with his ideas, but there is a force, a directness and simplicity in his writings which are not to be seen in the poems of all the major poets. Charan Singh's language is impressive, and if required, it is muscular, but sometimes, his ideas are not readily comprehended.

Madhukar has also published his collection of poems, 'Dōlā Kun Thappā' (1963). Some of the poems were already published, but some have been published for the first time. This collection is a major contribution to the Dogri poetry, and is a literary landmark. There is a heavenly flight, but also a down-to-mother-earth approach. There is sweetness, there is richness and there is maturity. Madhukar stands out not only as a better poet than before but a better man as well.

Mohan Lal Spolia has also made a remarkable progress. Some of his earlier weaknesses and sentimentalism persist, but his technical skill has considerably improved, and his choice of theme and its treatment are really creditable. Spolia sometimes writes for a

section of the public which has a rightist approach in politics, but the force and vehemence of his style are at times astonishing. If he could curb his sentiments and his exuberance which take away the sense of proportion, Spolia can be a great Dogri poet.

Tara Samailpuri too has added to the rich volume of Dogri poetry. His 'Bâwe' is a masterly satire on the idle 'Sadhus' who, with the first ray of the morning sun, 'invade' the houses of people with their begging-bowls. They are least perturbed by the social evils or misery, and least concerned whether the country is at peace or war; they are only concerned with their 'âttâ' and 'châwal'. The poem is a forceful exposure of these 'Sadhus' who live on the earnings of ordinary men-folk, by exploiting the feelings of compassion and devotion of their women-folk. If only these 'Sadhus' could lend a helping hand in the constructive efforts being made in the country, or in defending its freedom, they will prove their usefulness. But if they did, they would remain 'Sadhus' no longer. Tara Samailpuri has captured the very tone and voice of these beggars, and has faithfully portrayed their mode of living—acting 'Sadhus' in the morning, and drinking and gambling at night. The descriptions are powerful and authentic; and the style is a mixture of comedy and satire. 'Bâwe' makes its readers laugh in the beginning but then fills them with anger and disgust for such drones, who, by their misdeeds fill the common man with irreverence even for the genuine Sadhus. Tara Samailpuri is at present posted at Billawar. Billawar

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is one of the attractive places of Jammu province and is famous for the temple of Sukrala Devi, where the devout to pay their homage Billawar is an ancient town, where history and myth combine. Tara Samailpuri has written a long poem on 'Billawâr', in which he has given expression to the folk-beliefs, but not superstitions prevailing in that area. In its treatment, the poem reminds one of Bhagwat Prasad Sathe's *Kūrmen Dâ Lâma*; for though the themes are entirely different, their treatment is similar to each other's. Both of them write as if they believe in what they are writing; and this lends conviction and authenticity to their subjects.

The nature-descriptions of this poem remind one of Tara Samailpuri's earlier poem 'Unsambe Gēet'. There is the same rich but complex imagery, the same artistic treatment of detail wherein history and myth are interwoven into a rich texture, which we have witnessed in his 'Unsambe Gēet'. And though the subject of the poem can admit of exaggerations in its treatment, the approach is, on the whole, restrained.

One wishes Tara Samailpuri should write such poems more often.

These days Dinoo Bhai Pant has started writing plays more seriously than poetry. Poetry he writes only casually, when some Kavi Sammelan is held or some occasion arises. He has written a poem on 'Hōli which reminds its listeners of the great poet that Dinco was. The humour which distinguishes Dinoo from the other poets of Dogri can be seen

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in this poem too, but Dinoo writes such poems only rarely. His emphasis is on the constructive aspect ; and therefore, his poetry, though it may appear to be more useful to a social worker, is not so much appealing to a student of literature.

His poem on the 'Will of Nehru' was clearly inspired by the 'Will' of Nehru, but Nehru's 'Will' is more poetic even when it is written in prose than Dinoo's poem, and Dinoo confesses this. But the hand of the old master, which Dinoo used to be, can sometimes be seen by flashes.

Kishen Samailpuri, who got a second prize from the Academy for his collection of Urdu poems, 'Firdaus-i-Wattan' in 1963-64, is not the same prolific writer of Dogri as he used to be. He still writes Ghazals and Geets, but mostly for the Radio.

Parma Nand 'Almast' has added quite a number of new poems to his old stock, and published them as 'Jhūnak'. The old Almast—a romantic, a lover of the hilly areas, and writer of fine songs is now giving place to a more meditative and reflective poet. The deeper problems of life, of philosophy and mysticism, which one finds in Swami Brahmanand's poetry, are also sometimes glimpsed in Almast's poetry.

Aâõñ ke ân, te tōõ ke āñ.....'

'What am I, and what are you.....?' (page 29, Sâra Sâhitya, 1960-62). Only Almast can't be as sustained in his wanderings in the realm of reflective ideas as Swami Ji is : the romantic trait asserts itself too readily.

Ram Lal Karloopia is an elderly person. An

agriculturist by profession, he lives near Gajansoo in Jammu Tehsil. He is one of those people who were inspired to writing poetry after listening to the poems recited in various Kavi Sammelans organised by Dogri Sanstha and the Information Department.

Ram Lal Karloopia is not very well-educated. Therefore, the flights of imagination are not to be seen in his poetry, but there is a first-hand knowledge of natural objects—of flowers, fields and meadows; of birds and the music produced by them. His poem, 'Saṁ', pages 57-58, *Sâṛâ Sâhitya*, 1960-62 shows that Papiha is a keen watcher of nature—of the sky, the clouds during rainy season, of the green grass, the croaking of frogs and the chirping birds. He is essentially a descriptive poet, but sometimes he also tries his hand on reflective topics: *Phirdiyân Ghirdiyân Chhâmân* (page 58-59, *Sâṛâ Sâhitya*, 1960-62). It tells of the ups and downs of life, of joys at one moment and sorrows at another. Between these two extremes moves the cycle of life.

His 'Basaṁ', a yet unpublished poem, describes the advent of spring season. Although his poetry is deficient in the finer qualities of thought and emotion, and suffers from the short-comings of defective metre, this poem is singularly rich in all these respects. His grasp has become firmer and his execution has become maturer.

Chaudhary Ghulam Rasool is the native of Billawar, about which Tara Samailpuri has written a beautiful poem. By profession a contractor, Ghulam Rasool is a poet by temperament and choice. He has written a good many poems which concern the local problems and local issues. There is a good deal of irony and satire in

his poems, and some degree of authenticity. His vision, however, is limited and quite understandably so. He can improve as a poet if he reads what other modern poets of Dogri are writing, for his language has a native strength, and this can stand him in good stead.

Prem Singh lives in Ramnagar and is a Hakim by profession. The language of his poems reminds one of Bhagwat Prasad Sathe, for Sathe too lived in Ramnagar. Prem Singh writes on subjects of topical interest, and his poem, written on the death of Jawahar Lal Nehru, contains laudable sentiments.

Hem Raj Thapa was born in Kuha, a village in Hiranagar Tehsil. In his early age, he left for Amritsar and started working in a textile mill there. It was at Amritsar that he developed taste for writing poetry. Generally he writes poems in Punjabi, but for some time past, he has been writing in Dogri too. He writes songs based on the tunes of film music, but his writing has a style of folk-songs.

Narsingh Dev Jamwal is like that speck of cloud which, in a matter of few hours, grows into a sizable phenomenon in the sky. He appeared on the Dogri scene only a couple of years ago, but he has surprised everyone by the muscular strength of his language, and the novelty of his subjects and their treatment. And what is more, he is equally apt in painting with his brush and colours as he is with his words. Only one can't be certain whether he starts painting first with his brush and colours or with his words; for the word and sound-pictures produce the same cumulative effect as a piece of painting in colour does.

His 'Kavitâ' page 35-36, *Sârâ Sâhitya*, 1963, reminds us of Onkar Singh Awara's 'Awârâ'; but Awara's 'Awârâ' is nearer the English poem 'Wander-Thirst,' than Narsingh Dev's 'Kavitâ'. Narsingh Dev's poem is more descriptive; it has the quality of a painting. The poem moves haltingly, as if one scene is being replaced by another; Awara's poem moves with greater speed and is less self-conscious. Awara's Awara never stops; he moves on even though sometimes his steps falter and he feels a temptation to stop when a beautiful face beckons him. Narsingh Dev's Awara is a lover of nature and he stops in the way to enjoy the sounds and sights around him.

His 'Rizk Dâtâ' (pages 37-38 of '*Sârâ Sâhitya*', 1963), is also full of the pictorial quality. His approach to many problems is new and bold, and he brings a freshness in the treatment of his themes. This 'newness' is a distinct feature of his poetry and painting; it reminds of Madhukar's early poetry. 'Namî Kavitâ, Name Raste' is a collection of his poems which is in the press.

Narsingh Dev has also written some short-stories; 'Yamdar' is the most impressive of them all. He also writes in Urdu. He is an employee of Police Department.

Amar Singh Adal is a young poet of Marîn village of Hiranagar Tehsil. He is comparatively uneducated, and, being an inhabitant of a backward area, it would be too much to expect from him the same sophistication or originality which one expects from Shastri, Madhukar or Deep. His poems deal with the

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theme of patriotism, and are quite impressive on account of their forceful style and language.

'Amar Balidân', pages 41-43, Sârâ Sâhitya, 1963, narrates the story of the first war of India's Independence—1857—and comes down to the present times of the Chinese invasion of India. 'Amar Balidân' is similar to Madhukar's 'Jōōth Naīyōñ âkhdâ, Merī galleñ ch sacchâi âl', but Madhukar's canvas is much wider and he has a better historical perspective. But 'Amar Balidân' is quite impressive on account of its forceful style and patriotic theme.

Chhaju Jogi. The impact of Kavi Sammelans organised in the rural areas by the cultural organisation has been considerable. Chhaju Jogi is one of those poets who are professional folk-singers, and who sing Kârkân and Bârân. But on seeing people coming from the cities and reciting their poems, he also felt like writing in Dogri. His style is essentially that of a folk-poet, because this style has come to him from his ancestors. Being one of the people, he understands their problems and expresses them in his poems. He writes on social problems, but there is also an element of satire in them. 'Shehrī Dōgre' 'Dogrī Sañstha' and 'Ajā-diye Aâ' are some of his poems which have become quite popular in the Kandi areas of Jammu, and they are sung in the manner of folk-songs.

Nand Lal Karloopia. Nand Lal lives in Basantgarh in Ramnagar Tehsil. Basantgarh is a place which is cut off from the towns for a sufficient part of the year. This aspect of the existence is prominent in his poetry. Nand Lal, like Chhaju Jogi, is a folk-singer

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and has a similar style of writing poetry. He employs the metre of the folk-songs, and therefore, when his poems are recited, they appear to be the folk-songs, for which the area of Dudu-Basantgarh is quite famous ; only his themes are modern. The difficulties which the people had to face after the communal riots and when the rains failed in the fifties are described in some of the poems.

Another aspect which is prominent in his poems is love, free and unsophisticated ; at times quite uninhibited too. His poems, because they are a natural expression of an uneducated mind, lack in finer emotions or technical skill, but there is a natural grace and spontaneity.

He was discovered by the author when he had gone to Basantgarh in 1964 to collect and record the folk-songs. One of his poems is published in *Sârâ Sâhitya*, 1963. (Geet—Page 44).

Charan Dass also belongs to the Basantgarh area, and was discovered by the author in the same year in which Nand Lal Karloopia was discovered. He has read up to the middle standard, and can be considered to be educated as compared to most of the people living in the hilly areas of Dudu-Basantgarh. Young as he is, love is the most common theme of his songs. Sometimes topical subjects are also treated in his poetry. He is a folk-singer, but his poetry is more self-conscious than folk-literature.

In addition, **Shri S. R. Sudhir**, formerly of the Information Department and **Shri Desh Bandhu**

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'Nutan' of the Education Department also write in verse and prose. Sudhir's poems deal with different aspects of love, and those of Nutan with the problems of the common man. Sudhir has written short-stories too, and Nutan a voluminous treatise on Habba Khatoon, the famous poetess of Kashmiri, but Nutan seems to have been carried away more by the legends about Habba Khatoon than by the historical facts. Neither Sudhir nor Nutan, however, has published any of his poems or prose pieces so far.

DRAMA

Prof. R. N. Shastri has written 'Brândi,' a one-act play, which has been published in Sârâ Sâhitya, 1963. The theme is good and language adequate to the theme, but the dialogues are too long. It is questionable whether the reading of a letter on the stage would produce the desired dramatic effect. And the play, though it's good from the literary point of view, lacks in action. And action is what is needed most in drama.

Shri Jitendar Sharma has recently joined the Academy as a Special Officer for Cultural Activities; formerly he was in the Jammu Radio, where he produced a number of good Radio-plays. He has, this time, written a Radio-play 'Kartavya' as well, published in Sârâ Sâhitya, 1963. Because it's been written from the angle of a radio-play, it is successful. The play lays emphasis upon the spirit of duty, which demands that one should subordinate one's joys and comforts to the well-being and security of the country.

Narendra Khajuria, too, has joined the Academy as Editor for Hindi. He has published a

number of Hindi books also, and his Hindi play, 'Râste, Kânte aur Phōōl' has won the first prize in the play-competition. He has also written a full-length play, 'Dhaundiyân Kaṇḍâṇ' in Dogri which can be staged on one set. But in his effort to make the play suitable for playing on one set, Narendra has made it quite artificial. The title of the play 'Dhaundiyân Kaṇḍâṇ' (Crumbling walls) is symbolic, but symbolism has not been carried forward. In fact, while reading the play, one feels Narendra has been so much lost in contriving humorous situations that he has almost forgotten about the title. On reading the play, one realises that the walls have already collapsed, for the main proponent of the Jagirdari system, Ram Dass himself, before long, becomes a convert to the new ideas and new values; and it is he who drives the last nail into the coffin of the decaying feudalistic system. Nor is there anything odious or disgusting shown about the feudalistic set-up. Whatever evils or short-comings Narendra describes about the Jagirdari system are present in the whole Indian society—the greed and avarice, sticking to antiquated notions and yet looking a step higher in society. And these too are described lightly.

Even in this play, Narendra does not mention anything about the locale. Where does all this happen? Nor do the names give any indication of the region where the incidents take place. Who are the Jagirdars? and who is the prince? Attempt has been made to create mirth by engaging four labourers and giving them instructions in the art of the waiters, but why couldn't the waiters be engaged from any

hotel for a few days so that they could function efficiently and save Ram Dass's money? But if this were done, much of what Narendra writes could not then be written. Narendra suffers from Narcissism with a difference: he seems to be so infatuated by his own sense of humour or command over language that he has forgotten what he set out to do in this play. And even language is inept at places and not used in a correct manner. Some of the dialogues are superfluous, and many others are just flat.

There is no proper sense of direction. The names or the ages of the 'dramatis personae' are not mentioned correctly. Prince Natwar is called some times 'Singh' and sometimes 'Lal'. Rohini at one stage is said to be 16-17 years old; at another she is referred to be 17-18. Natwar is made a fool and not a knave, and therefore, he provokes our laughter and not our anger or disgust. Ram Dass does not appear to be a Jagirdar either in appearance or behaviour. Most of the dialogues leave us cold and indifferent; many of the situations are trite.

Characterisation is weak. Only one character seems to dominate the play, and that is Narendra Khajuria, the play-wright. Maya Ram, and to some extent. Natwar Lal provide mirth; the rest are mere shadows.

The only thing to recommend the play is that it can be staged on one set. Sometimes, the reader gets a glimpse of the crisp prose-style of Narendra Khajuria, but only at times. The play 'Dhaundiyân Kandân' comes as an anti-climax to what Narendra has written

earlier. And to say the least, it needs thorough retouching.

Writers outside the State

Sudarshan Kaushal. The ancestors of Sudarshan Kaushal are from Nurpur, Kangra, but his father has settled in Dharamshala. Sudharshan Kaushal writes poems in Urdu, but in the fifties, Sudershan came to Jammu and worked as a teacher in a private institution. He met the writers of Dogri and started writing Dogri poems. Like Yash, Sudarshan has a sweet voice and some of the songs, sung in a pleasant tune, appear all the better compositions. Sudarshan is a progressive writer, and, therefore, when he sees that the things are not as good as they should be, he writes against them either in an angry mood, as in his song

Jali Jâyō Blackâ dâ Râj'

or, in an ironic manner. He has described in a beautiful fashion the spirit of the freedom-fighters and how the determined volunteers were able to make the British feel that they could stay in India no longer. Gandhi had become the soul of resurgent India, and the Gandhi cap had assumed greater importance than the powerful British crown. Ultimately, the British had to leave and the Congress came into power in India.

'Tōpōō eh khâi leyâ Tâj'

That is, the Gandhi cap has supplanted the British crown.

At present, Sudarshan is a Headmaster in one of the schools in Dharamshala.

Harish Padre is a pastor in Palampur. He is a good song-writer, and writes his songs in the metre of Pahari songs. He is a good descriptive poet, and sometimes he describes the natural phenomena in a very artistic manner.

One of his compositions is really top class: 'Dōb Lagī' describes the impending storm as the sky is overcast with clouds. How shall the boat cross the river?

Summing up

As might have become clear from the preceding pages, Dogri has covered a larger ground than could have been expected from a language whose literary history, strictly speaking, is no older than two to three decades. In poetry, the reflective, the philosophical, the meditative and mystical topics along with the social and political aspects are being dealt with; the purely poetic, lyrical, descriptive or narrative topics, containing humour and irony, wit and satire were already there. Translations have also helped in enriching the language.

In prose, the number of short-story writers, and the good short-stories written by them, is increasing. The canvas of their writings is growing bigger and larger; the problems tackled are varied, and in the matter of plot and technique, in making new experiments, the writers are taking new strides. One-act plays, radio-plays and stage-plays are also being written. Essays, reflective and descriptive, and pertaining to art and archaeology are also being written. In addition, humorous essays are being written by Prof Lakshmi Narain. Vishwa Nath Khajuria has written 'Dōgri

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ch Hâsya Ras,' which is yet in the manuscript form. Even literature for children is being produced in a fair quantity. The University examinations Tilak, Praveen, and Shiromani in Dogri have also been started. All this is heartening but not sufficient. There are yet many fields which have still remained untouched and unexplored. There is no writer in Dogri who has written anything on History or sociology, anthropology or psychology, science or economics. No concerted effort has been made to produce literary criticism in Dogri in a detached and objective matter. The stage when movement¹ for Dogri and every writer in Dogri was to be encouraged is over. Now there is a need for evaluation and self-criticism. Not only the literatures in other regional languages of India but in some of the leading languages of the world should be studied and efforts made to emulate them. The patronage which Dogri is getting from the Cultural Academy and other official agencies is not insignificant, but greater awareness among the intelligentsia and the general public needs must be created. And there should be a greater coordination between the writers of Dogri living in the cities and villages, as also between the writers of Dogri in the State and in Delhi, Punjab and Himachal Pradesh. Then alone can Dogri truly attain a place among the regional languages of India and retain it not on the strength of the number of its speaker, alone but on the basis of the great language that Dogri is and its great literature.

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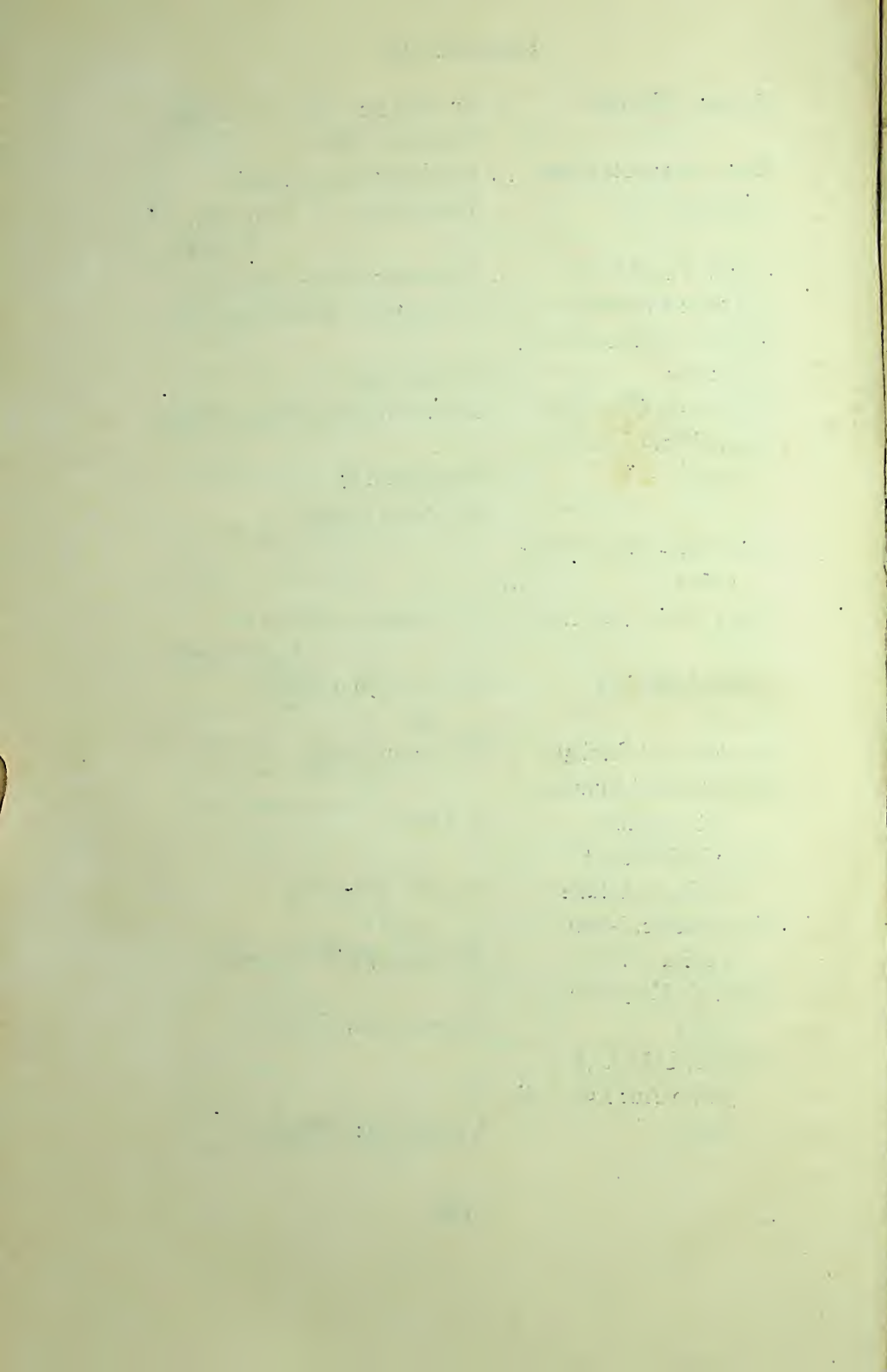
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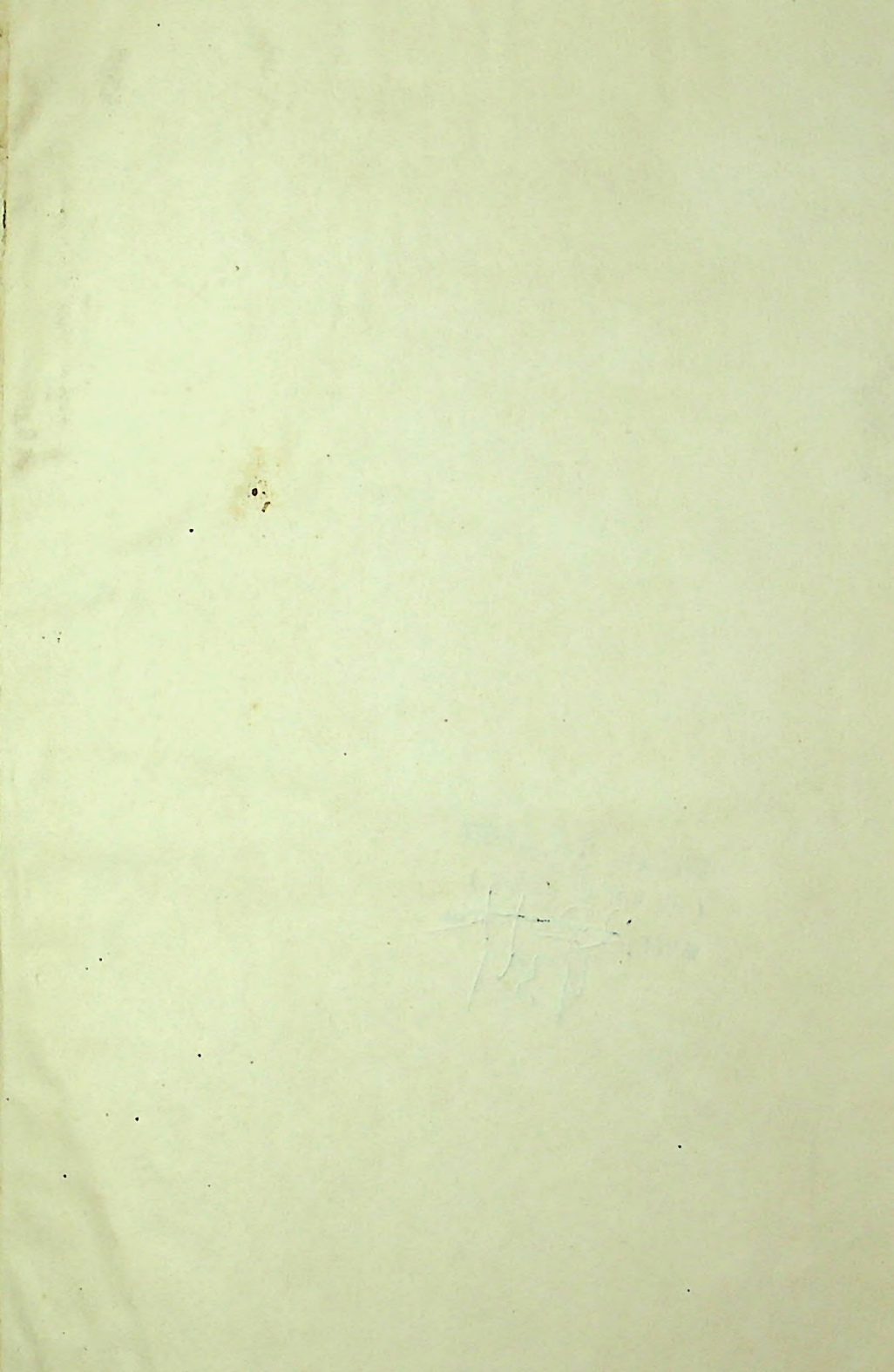
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शास्त्रा पुरा कालय

(संजीवनी शास्त्रा केन्द्र)

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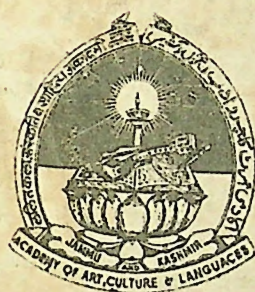
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शारदा पुस्तकालय

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